

IS JOOLS HOLLAND THE NEW PETE **MURRAY?** Why Radio 2 is chucking in the cardigan

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CHRIS SMITH'S SOUTH BANK FOLLY How his bid to rival Paris ended in tears

ARTS, PAGE 16



FOOTBALL'S NEW FRENCH **PHILOSOPHEI** Ooh aah, a touch of Cantona at Arsenal SPORT PAGE 22



Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Sunday Times is trying to smear me,

Exclusive

By Anthony Bevins, Stave Boggan and Andrew Buncombe

JOHN PRESCOTT last night accused the Sunday Times of is of planting a reporter in his conestituency Labour Party to act as backan agent provocateur, influculaencing allegations and local bour tittle-tattle" of sleaze and scan-The dal.

man A report yesterday from con government auditors cleared Ed him of any impropriety in the John Prescott: Received wh sale of Hull Housing Action

Trust houses to a company which employed the Deputy Prime Minister's son, Jonathan

fill Mr Prescott launched his outspoken attack on Rupert Murdoch's Sunday Times - the Prescott was launched by the t weekend that he had failed to declare a £27,750 donation from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, and a report headlined: "Prescott's son may cash

in as council homes go cheap." In an attack that might well displease No 10 - which has been cultivating Mr Murdoch and his empire - Mr Prescott accused the newspaper of running a politically-motivated campaign to smear him, fuelled by a man who had been "planted" in his Hull East constituency

He told The Independent that the undercover reporter was Simon Trump, who had switched membership of the Bristol West Labour Party to Hull East in August 1996. Martin Ivens, the paper's deputy editor, last night confirmed that Mr Trump had been sent up to Hull "to get stories", having previously worked for the paper in

the West Country. "The Sunday Times role, both in the incident for myself and East Hull." Mr Prescott said, "has been one that has had more political content and mo-



tip-off about infiltrators

tivation than that of journalists trying to find out what is wrong. It's a kind of, almost agent

provocateur role." The investigation into Mr months ago and was referred to inside its Wapping offices as

Project X. Neighbours at the threestorey Victorian house that Trump described as "home" said vesterday that he was seldom seen, but when he was, he described himself as a "travelling salesman".

He occupied a ground-floor bedsit at 17 Westcott St, a stone's throw from the Hull East Labour Party headquarters, where Mr Prescott holds his surgeries and which Trump in-

Yet there is no evidence that he intended to use it as a permanent base. Inquiries by The Independent have established that he was not on the electoral register and none of his credit cards were registered at the address.

Andrew Thomas, a 36-yearold student said: "We hardly ever saw him, but he wasn't here very often. I spoke to him once and he said he was a travelling salesman and simply used the

flat as a base. "But we did notice in the

says Prescott mail lots of Labour Party literature for him. I remember in

particular one envelope that

quite clearly said: 'Labour Par-

ty membership'. He was a very

clean-cut chap and I did notice

that he has a very new car." Comparing what was happening now on the Sunday Times with what had happened more than 30 years ago, when he had been investigated by the same newspaper for his role in the controversial 1966 seamen's strike, Mr Prescott said: "It's a very shabby shadow of the those

"Now you get in there, tell them you're a mate, muck around in all the crap. It's not even an issue of politics. This is about internal tittle-tattle.

"The Sunday Times went up there with the object of showing corruption. They couldn't show corruption, and so he paper that carried allegations newspaper more than 12 feeds the concept of corruption with all the tittle-tattle

He told The Independent that he had been tipped off last year, after the May election, that people had been put into Hull to find corruption. "I was given a name, this man Trump. I checked it out; he had been in Bristol, then he changed to Hull, and I asked around the councillors and I asked my agent and he said he had heard this guy had been accepted by the party and [was] going out with the councillors for drinks

and things like that." Mr Prescott, Secretary of State for the Environment. Transport and the Regions. called the auditors in after allegations that 25 homes had been sold to Wyke Developments at a knockdown price of just over £5,000 each, when they

were worth about £20,000. The inquiry found that a "satisfactory price" was achieved for the taxpayer in the sale by the North Hull Housing Action Trust to Wyke Developments and that ministers were not involved in the transTravolta shows his true Primary Colors



Film first: John Travolta and his wife Kelly with a fake cover of Time arriving at the première in Los Angeles of Primary Colors, in which he plays the President Photograph: APP

By Tim Cornwell in Los Angeles

CANDIDATE John Travolta arrives in American theatres next week. The film version of Primary Colors, the novel that set Washington on fire with its thinly veiled portrayal of the 1992 Clinton campaign, premiered in Los Angeles on

Thursday night. The film's boosters say Travolta's portrayal of Jack Stanton - read Bill Clinton - is uncanny, from the moist eyes and high-rising silver hair to the presidential hug and Arkansas drawl. Travolta is backed by Emma Thompson, aka Hillary, as the politician's wife, and British actor Adrian Lester as

ly compared to Clinton campaign glamour boy George

Stephanopoulos. For film buffs, there is the particular pleasure of seeing Billy Bob Thornton, fresh from his role as a half-crazed killer in Slingblade, playing the fictional version of Clinton's political axe man, James Carville.

The huge publicity promises a major Hollywood debut for stage actor Lester, 27, Thompson, he told USA Today, "held my hand because she knew what it was like coming to Los Angeles. She made sure I didn't feel too lonely, and I will never forget that."

The timing could not have been better for its makers, or apparently worse for Bill Clinton, the story's narrator and con-

science, Henry Burton, close- at a time when Monica Lewinsky has at last moved off the front pages. In the film Jack Stanton's "bimbo" arrives as hairdresser Cashmere McLeod, played by Gia Carides, for whom read nightclub singer

> Gennifer Flowers. But the film is not as sharp in its portrayal of Clinton as the book, whose anonymous author was finally revealed as Newsweek writer Joe Klein.

> Travolta, 44, was paid a reported \$17m. But he is a selfproclaimed fan of the President who says he has taken "zero interest" in the Lewinsky affair. "I knew the film was not going to be a cheap shot," he said. There are other issues, such as ... the truth of politics,

and rising above that truth."

Today's news

Call for flexibility in murder sentence

The mandatory life sentence

for murder should be abol-

ished and judges, not the

Home Secretary, should de-

Hacker stole secrets of stars from dustbins

A TRAINEE solicitor collected secret information on some of the top names in showbusiness -including Elton John and Lord their agent's computer and rum-

maging through his dustbins. Other stars whose personal details he obtained include Lloyd Cole, Lionel Ritchie, the dancer Michael Flatley and

Barry Humphries. Among items seen by The Independent are tour arrangements for Sir Eiton, details of a over his rates of expenditure on private performance he gave for the Sultan of Brunei, the home telephone numbers and worldwide addresses for a host of stars and even an internal memo to Clifford and the Mirror. staff warning them to be careful of how they dispose of their rubbish. Some documents bore the words "To be shredded".

Benjamin Pell, 34, who is now being sued by Sir Elton and the agent, John Reid Enterprises, ters and the Branson exchanges says he amassed 75 bags of papers, including bank statements, confidential legal correspondence and tour arrangements befc : being stopped by a High Court injunction.

For six months after the offices of Mr Reid in the hope of discovering secrets about her friendship with Elton John, whose song "Candle In The Wind" was re-dedicated to her. business. Nicola Turnbull, his di-

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw how easy it was to get hold of this stuff," Mr Pell, who also works as a freelance music journalist, told The Independent. "I went through their rubbish and I got some

very elever computer nerds to hack into the system for me. Getting into the computer system was even easier than getting into the rubbish.

"I am a fan of Elton's and I Lloyd-Webber - by hacking into wondered whether I could find anything out after Diana's death. I certainly don't usually go through people's rubbish or hack into their computers."

Through his dual snooping, Mr Pell found copies of Eiton John's bank statements and letters from his accountants, Price Waterhouse, expressing concern luxury items. These details were published in the Mirror newspaper, resulting in writs being issued against Mr Pell, the publicist Max

He also found copies of letters from Sir Elton and Richard Branson arguing over the inclusion of "Candle In the Wind" on a charity album. He insists that the Price Waterhouse letwere found in rubbish outside the agent's offices.

Mr Pell is now limited in what he can say about the affair. Lawyers for Mr Reid succeeded in having a strict Anton Piller order issued against him, aldeath of Diana, Princess of lowing them to freeze his assets Wales. Mr Pell kept an electronic and search at his address. They of the documents, which The Independent understands are still in existence, possibly abroad.

> Mr Reid is in Australia on rector of business affairs, said the company was unable to comment because of the pending legal actions. It is understood. however, that the company will deny that confidential information was thrown out as rubbish.

_awrence case officer faces charge

Police Complaints The Authority (PCA) has recommended that a senior officer involved in the original inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence, cilled five years ago, should face a charge of neglect of duty. Scotland Yard said last night.

Stephen, a bright, popular, 18-year-old student, was stabbed to death at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, by a gang of white youths in April 1993. Nobody has been convicted of the murder. The officer involved has not



been suspended or named, nor the rank revealed, and Scotland Yard was last night considering if the individual would face an internal disciplinary board. The board has a wide range

of options to consider if the officer was disciplined, including dismissal from the force.

The PCA stated: "Authority member Ms Joe Dobry has recommended that one senior officer who is still serving with the Metropolitan Police service should face a charge of neglect of duty.

The PCA investigation started in spring last year following the inquest into Stephen's death that found he was unlawfully killed in a racially motivated attack by five white

The Lawrence family called for an investigation into the police handling of the case and recommendation and the mata report on the investigation ter is under discussion. This is



Stephen Lawrence: stabbed by a gang of white youths

was published last December. A spokeswoman for the Metropolitan Police said last night: "We have received their being considered by the Met- Lawrence. But five years on we ropolitan Police Service. If necessary, the authority has the power to direct the Metropolitan Police Service to charge the officer."

Lawrence, said the news was a small step in the right direction, Metropolitan Police have had but not enough. "One of the main things I have said all along is that when I feel vindicated is when somebody's doing time, and that's the only time I am going to feel vindicated in ing the years since Stephen's any way," he told the BBC's Six O'Clock News.

A member of the Stephen Lawrence campaign, Mrs Ros Howelis, added: "We have always known that the police failed. It's a pity that it's just one police officer and the others have retired, but we think it's great news."

"I think this has come as

quite a shock to Doreen family should know too."

will never feel good until the perpetrators of the crime are chind bars." It is unusual that the

Lawrence family has been in-Stephen's father, Neville formed of the PCA's recommendation before the a chance to consider it, but this move highlights the high profile that the case has taken. The Stephen Lawrence Campaign has petitioned constantly durdeath for justice, often in the face of seemingly impossible

A source at the PCA said: "This has been forced upon us by the demands of the inquiry. "We decided it was important that all officers should

that if the officers knew, the

know whether they faced disciplinary charges. We also felt

cide the terms, the Lord Chief Justice said yesterday. Page 4

Britons killed on

Greek island A British couple have been stabbed to death in their retirement home on the Greek island of Cephalonia. Page 3

Dome gas angers environmentalists Environmentalists vowed to

resume their battle against the millennium dome after it became known that its air conditioning system would use a powerful "greenhouse Page 5

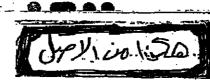
MOUTH WATERING OYSTERS. (BUT NOT FROM OUR FOOD HALL.) ROLEX



It's probably the largest, most tempting display of Rolex Oysters you'll ever see, all glittering beneath the crystal chandeliers in our Watch Room. And because we don't believe you'll ever see finer chronometers in your life, we've made sure it's not far from the champagne in the Wine Department. Just in case you should feel like celebrating the purchase of a lifetime.



INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 . CROSSWORDS, TIME OFF P12 AND P24 . TODAY'S TELEVISION, THE EYE .



Bingham in plea over murder sentences

By Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

MANDATORY life sentences for murder should be abolished and judges, not the Home Secretary, should decide the terms served by murderers, the Lord Chief Justice said

The current situation ignores "a cardinal principle of morality, justice and democratic government" - that the prison term to be served should be announced in open court, Lord Bingham told an audience of senior police officers.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, moved quickly, however, to quash any possibility of the Government taking up Lord Bingham's proposal. And victims' families angrily rejected the proposal as "ludicrous".

In his speech, Lord Bingham rejected the argument that murder was such a uniquely evil crime that only a life term would do, as "at best, a quarter truth".

Murders varied greatly and it was "unjustifiable" to treat them all the same, he said.

He cited as an example the case of paratrooper Lee Clegg, who was jailed for life for the murder of a joyrider in Belfast. Although Clegg has been granted a retrial, Lord Bingham said even if he was guilty as originally charged, he did not deserve the same sentence as a mass murderer like Fred West.

Lord Bingham said the real problem lay in the obligation to pass a life sentence on all murderers. And he added that the current rules ignored "a cardinal principle of morality, justice said Liberty director John Wadand democratic government" that the prison term to be served should be announced in

At present, all murderers are automatically jailed for life. should be left to the courts."

The judge in secret recommends a term of years to be served - the "tariff" - but this can be altered by the Lord Chief Justice and the Home Secretary. Once the tariff is served, the Home Secretary decides when the killer should be released.

That means the life sentence "is no more than a formula which gave no real clue to the offender, to the victim's family, to the media or to the public at large, what in practical terms of years to be served in prison the sentence meant". Lord Bingham said.

In his response, the Home Secretary said mandatory life sentences were necessary to protect the public and ensure the punishment imposed on criminals fitted their crime.

"Murder is very different from all other categories of offence. The public expect and require greater protection from murderers," Mr Straw said.

Lord Bingham was accused of being "completely out of touch with reality" by Norman Black, of Support After Murder and Manslaughter, whose girlfriend was murdered four years ago. "It's an insult to the bereaved who are left behind." he said. "We don't want revenge but we do want retribution ...

"Proper sentencing won't bring anyone back but it will give us a sense of justice. To try and do away with the life sentence is simply degrading to us."

Lord Bingham's proposal was welcomed, however, by the civil rights group Liberty. "Mandatory life sentences prevent the court giving a sentence that is appropriate and just," ham. "They allow politicians to interfere with sentencing and allow them to decide when another person should be released from prison - matters which



The delegation led by Sir William McPherson at the scene of Stephen Lawrence's mender yesterday

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

Lawrence inquiry chief visits site of killing

By Matthew Brace

THE MAN heading a new inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence paid an emotional visit to the site of the attack in

Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, a retired High Court judge, said his visit was a bid to encourage witnesses to come ory of Stephen".

"It is right that this inquiry is into his death and it seemed to me right to come here and remind people of the terrible events of five years ago," Sir Villiam said.

He spent several minutes looking at a memorial stone in the pavement at the spot where Stephen died, which was de-

Atlantic chart, noon today

he waited for a bus in April 1993. No one has been consecution.

Sir William has already appealed for more witnesses to come forward and give evidence to the inquiry, which gets under way on Monday at the Elephant and Castle, south Lon-

He admitted yesterday that no one had responded to his appeal but he said he still hoped raw last July, would help solve some of the questions surrounding the case.

"I hope it will lance the boil and help the Lawrences come to terms with the dreadful collapsed at the Old Bailty

"New prosecutions are unlikely, as everyone who knows by killed in an unprovoked racks about this case must realise, but that the inquiry, announced it's impossible to forecast what the Home Secretary Jack will come out of this inquiry."

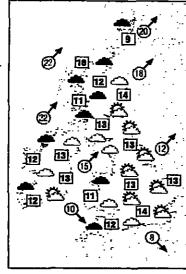
Five men were arrested in connection with the murder but charges against two were at the vandalism that was perdropped in September 1995. petrated". "It was an unspeak-The trial of the remaining three

events of five years ago," he the following year. An inquest last year decided that Stephen was unlawfulattack by five white youths.

Sir William, who has visited the spot time before, added that another reason for yesterday's visit was to "mark our disgust"

WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today



General summary and outlook: Scotland will be very mild but mainly cloudy and breezy with occasional drizzly rain, more especially over westfacing coasts and hills. Sheltered areas of eastern Scotland will be a little brighter with a few sunny intervals and the highest temperatures. Northern Ireland, northern England and north Wales will also be largely cloudy but mild with nothing worse than a few spots of drizzle. Meanwhile, south Wates and the rest of England will be dry and mild with a mix of cloud and a few sunny

Sunday will be mild again everywhere with the best of the sunny spells in the south. Northern Scotland will have some light rain, and this damp weather will extend across Northern Ireland and southern Scotland by evening. On Monday drizzly rain will edge south through England and Wales, but Scotland and Northern Ireland will turn brighter and colder. Tuesday will be cold with a brisk wind and a mix of sunshine and showers.

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A5200, York Way, Kings Cross, Lane reductions at Goods Way for long term work on Maiden Lane Bridge. Until Aug 1. Somerset, M5 J22-23. Major roadworks & con-A46 Rath-Cold Ashton, Major m

West Widlands, MS at the M6 J8 Birmingham (M6). Narrow lanes on link to M6 North due West Yorkshire, M62 J28-29, Dawsbury to Leeds. Contrallow and restrictions. Until Dec 31 1998,

Greater Manchester, A666 between Farmworth & Kaerstey, St Peter's Way, Roadworfs with no access to St Peter's Way from the Keersley Roundabout, Unit 20th May Lancashire, M6 between J32 Presion (M55) and J33 Lancaster (A6). Lane closure. 2 taxes

Out and about with AA Road-

Lighting-up times

Nottingham18.08 to 6.17

Air quality Yesterday's Readings

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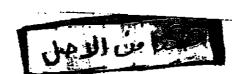
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Immortal – for the time being at least

"YELTSIN is like a cat, he has nine lives," a Russian equities trader commented yesterday when the markets dipped on the news that once again the 67-year-old Kremin leader was ill. The stock exchange is sensitive to such mat-ters. National television was less excited, leading its news bulletins with the latest on the expulsion of Russian diplomats from Norway. The man in the street shrugged his shoulders, sure that the President would soon be back.

Mr Yeltsin, who had his finest hour atop a tank resisting a hardline coup attempt in 1991, thrives on situations where he has to fight. He is not a man to let mere illness get

And we can only hope that the relative glasnost of post-Communist Russia is our guarantee that when we are told officially he has "acute laryngotracheitis", he really does have a sore throat or something similiar and not some life-threatening illness. Leonid Brezhnev, after all, was still described as baving a cold when he lay on his death bed.

Still, since he underwent a heart bypass operation in November 1996, the Russian President's health has been a cause for worry throughout the world. Under pressure from the press, Mr Yeltsin has had to learn to be more honest about it.

He first disappeared into hospital without any explanation after Mikhail Gorbachev. then leader of the Soviet Union, sacked him from the ruling Communist Party Politburo in 1987. In retrospect, it seems this shock may have marked the start of his heart problems. But Mr Gorbachev unwittingly helped his career by making him a martyr and, when he came out of hospital, he went on to become the most popular opposition politician in Russia. He was elected Russian President in June 1991 and took over from Mr Gorbachev as Kremlin leader when the Soviet Union collapsed later that year.

The heavy-drinking Yeltsin tried to keep fit by playing tennis. But heart problems continued to dog him, bursting out into the open takes the ultimate decisions.

IN THE NEWS

BORIS YELTSIN

just after he had won a second term as Russian President in the summer of 1996. At first, as yesterday, aides said he had a sore throat; but his continued absence from public view so soon after he had won a stunning election victory against all the odds looked suspicious. Soon they were forced to admit that the lood supply to his heart was deficient. Mr Yelsin then came clean to the Russ-

ian people himself, saying the life of an invalid was not for him and he had decided to undergo a heart bypass, a relatively routine operation in the West, so that he could return to politics with renewed vigour.

The operation, carried out by a team of

Russian doctors with the Texas heart specialist Michael De Bakey hovering in the background, was described in surprising detail to the press. Dr De Bakey declared Mr Yeltsin's operation a complete success, saying it would give him 10 more years of life if he controlled his drinking and resisted his favourite fatty foods, such as Russian sausage. But unfortunately, straight after the operation, the Kremlin leader caught a cold and fell ill with pneumonia in the freezing January of 1997. His return to politics was delayed until last spring.

Since then he has been active both on the

international stage and at home. He takes more holidays than a younger leader might do - his fishing and skiing trips are televised to assure us of his continuing robustness. He is clearly ageing, and yet, though his enemies say it, he is not like Brezhnev, just a corpse eing propped up for show. He is still mentally alert and, when the spadework has been done by his underlings, he is still the man who

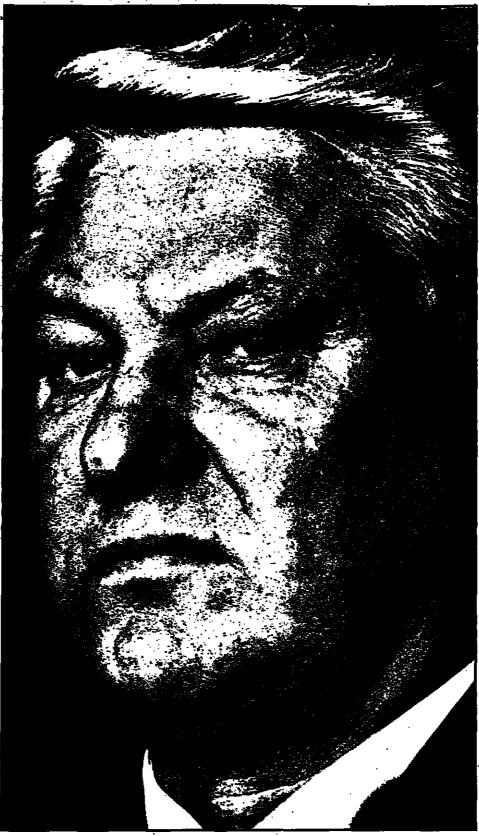
BORIS AND THE BOTTLE

Does Boris Yeltsin drink? Is the Pope a Catholic! Before he underwent heart surgery in November 1996, it would hardly have occurred to vodica-loving Russians to doubt that their President drank. They would not have respected him if he had abstained. Does Bons , and looking after the grandchildren. Yeltsin drink now? There is no real evidence of any hard drinking nowadays:

or tries to extend what his enemies call "littler could Mr Yelsin stand for a shird term-his "Tsar-like rule" into the next cen-" as President? Recently he commented that his "Tsur-like rule" into the next century may depend on the advice he re. the best guarantee of good relations between ceives from his eldest daughter, Tatyana. Moscowand Kley was not to charge the pre-Dyachenko. He trusts her so much that idents of Russia and Ukraine.

last year he made her an official presidential aide, responsible for his image. Tatyana, 38, a former rocket scienti apparently plays a stronger role behind the throne than Mr Yeltsin's wife, Naina, who is said to like baking cakes

The great constitutional question of the most DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL ment is not who would replace of the most in Whether Mr Yeltsin retires with dignity. The manufact afternation of this death, but



Survivor: 'Yeltsin is like a cat, he has nine lives' said one Russian

Britons stabbed to death on Greek isle

A BRITISH couple have been stabbed to death at their retirement home on the Greek island of Cephalonia. Roy Eccles, 55, and his wife,

Judith, 49, were found by Mrs Eccles' brother, who was visiting the island, in the early hours of Thursday, the Foreign Office said. They are believed to have been killed in their beds. Their car was found abandoned 25 miles away near the ferry port of Sami, where boats connect with Patras on the mainland. Forty extra police officers were drafted in from the mainland vesterday to help with the inquiry, and a specialist team was due to examine the car.

The murders have sbocked the peaceful island made famous by Louis de Berniere's book, Captain Corelli's Mandolin. A local police official said: This is an unprecedented crime in our area."

Mr Eccles, a former electrical engineer, and his wife, an accountant, had retired from Cambridgeshire to their newlybuilt house on the edge of the village of Kaminarata last October.

A police spokesman said they were not sure of the motive for the attack. The victims suffered multiple stab wounds and the house was ransacked, when the island fills up with visbut there were several puzzling features.

"The state of the house means that burglary is possible, but we found a lot of jewellery and other expensive things left chain, has been in the bestseller behind," be said. "We are look- list for months. It charts the Italing at other possibilities. It could have been over an argu- ond World War and the idea ment. But we tend to go for robbery it the moment."

Nick Sklavounakis, the own-



Murdered in their beds: Roy



the island, said the murders had shocked everyone.

"Cephalonia is a peaceful place and I don't remember there ever being a murder before," he said. "The worst thing that happens is in the summer itors and sometimes people get killed in road accidents.

Captain Corelli's Mandolin, the book which features the island, the largest in the Ionian ian occupation during the Secthat paradise can be violated by evil. As many as one in five of the thousands of Britons who er of a holiday apartment block visit the island are estimated to in Argostoli, the biggest town on arrive with a copy of the novel.

Male primary teachers join the endangered species list

Education Editor

of killing

Male primary teachers are becoming an endangered species. Nonly nine per cent of sixth-form boys put teaching as their top career choice compared with 40 per cent of girls, according to a new survey published today.

Men account for only 17 per cent of primary school teachers and, if the decline continues at the present rate, the male primary teacher will have disappeared by the year 2010. Nigel de Gruchy, general

secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, blamed pay for the feminisation of the profession. "Teaching is OK for a second income in a family but as a first income which is what young men might more likely be looking for - it is extremely unattractive."

He gave the example of an unruly eight-year-old who was recently visited by a male eduacational psychologist. "He called her Miss. As far as this boy was concerned, maleness



compared with 90,000 men.

Yesterday's survey, carried

out by the Teacher Training

Agency and the National Union

of Teachers, comes at a time

when the proportion of male

Doug McAvoy, the union's

general secretary, said the find-

ings were worrying. "The poor-

er performance of boys

compared with girls has in part

teachers is falling steadily.

and education were obviously now 96,000 female teachers mutually exclusive." Figures published recently show that in 1996 only 8,262 men entered teacher training compared with

Eighty eight per cent of primary classroom teachers are women and the proportion of female deputy heads and heads

Even in secondary schools, where men have traditionally outnumbered women, there are sexes found long holidays a very attractive part of the job and were most put off by the idea of unruly pupils. There is growing concern

about teacher recruitment. The Commons Select Committee on Education recently warned ministers that urgent action was needed. Applications for one-year postgraduate courses are down by 10 per cent. The drop for maths is 22 per cent and for physics 34 per cent.

role models in early education."

said they would be attracted to

teaching by levels of pay. Both

The survey of more than 1,000 16-19-year-olds showed that twice as many girls as boys

John Howson, an educational consultant and former adviser to the Teacher Training Agency, said: "Women are going into teaching because they think it involves a lifestyle which includes quality time for children. All this talk from the Government about longer hours and teachers taking on litschools in the holidays is a high-

Milk chocolate wins a reprieve from Brussels

By Katherine Butler in Brussels

THERE is fresh news from the front in the Great Chocolate War - traditional British milk chocolate has been saved by the Brussels bureaucrats.

In the latest twist to a long-running saga, tempts by chocolate purists on the Continent to force British people to buy only chocolate made from pure cocoa.

To the dismay of rival confectioners in Belgium and France, the Commission has chocolate. overruled members of the European Parament, who in a shock vote last October raised the prospect of a ban on British people buying Milk Tray or Cadbury's Dairy Milk MEPs had deleted a key phrase from a proposed new EU chocolate law which stated: "The UK and Ireland may authorise the use in their territory of the name

change the recipe if they wanted to go on describing their bars as milk chocolate, either on the home market or for export.

But the Commission has ignored this amendment in its latest version of the dian use rates twist to a range of the European Commission has rejected atamendment insisting that there can be no have a true European chocolate union. new chocolate legislation until scientists devise a reliable method for monitoring the amount of vegetable fat in a bar of

The chocolate war is as old as Britain's membership of the European Union and the new chocolate directive is the Commission's attempt to end it. In 1973 the UK and Ireland were granted exemptions from a ban on making chocolate from anything other than cocoa butter.

But while we were allowed to indulge

milk chocolate to designate the product". the national craving for sweet milky bars. This would have forced Cadbury's to made with up to 5 per cent vegetable fat, regarded as inferior on the Continent, the EU banned the export of British chocolate to the rest of Europe. The new directive would open up the trade for the first time in almost 25 years, although it looks as if

Poor cocoa-producing countries such as Ivory Coast are deeply upset by the latest Commission ruling. "They are not taking into account the interests of producing countries, although this directive will lead to a reduction in consumption of cocoa," said Silas Kamga, secretary general of the Cocoa Producers Association. And MEPs will get another attempt to stymic the Commission's proposal when the legislation comes back for a second reading in a few

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Outfoxed: Eleven-year-old Roseanne Mills, with Connor, her brother's toy fox. Mr Blair had said in reply to her letter that he would support a ban on hunting

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Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR yesterday left an ment about the workload of the 11-year-old schoolgirl "very, Prime Minister these questions very sad" by his failure to vote would not arise. We are a few for the bill to ban fox-hunting days from the Budget. It does before it was killed in the Com- not take too much to think what mons, in spite of promising to he is thinking about." Street.

(Hunting with Dogs) Bill used the Prime Minister's promise to Leeds schoolgirl Roseanne Mills to underline their warnmands for action against fox- volved." hunting.

through lack of time. A minis- er with a list of points to make ter told The Independent that the to callers from the media, in-Government will now have to cluding her view that dragprovide time in the next session hunting was a viable alternative of Parliament for a Bill to ban fox-hunting. "The Cabinet will have to act because there is so Animals, including the RSPCA much support for a ban among Labour MPs and in the party Prime Minister has made his pooutside."

The whips have warned min-Labour MPs who support a issue. ban on fox-hunting to defeat the Government. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said the Government had 'no mandate' to ban fox-hunting, but the anti-hunting MPs said they would be prepared to tag a fox- ed it through weeks of guerrilhunting ban onto the forthcoming Criminal Justice Bill.

Roseanne, a member of the RSPCA's junior club from 51 amendments and new claus-Leeds, had received a written es to debate on the Bill. promise by Mr Blair to vote for the Bill. He told her: "I think MP for Worcester, who sponfox- inting is the issue that sored the Bill, named next Fricauses the most public concern. day as the next day for debate. I do think hunting is wrong and But it will go to the back of a . I will vote in favour of a ban."

urnum for a series of votes before the Bill was killed yester-56 law/modern In-stone (1199.00 \$40E 500 1149.00

Asked what Mr Blair was do- go away."

ing, a Number Ten spokesman said: "He is at Chequers. If you stopped and thought for a mo-

do so in a letter from Downing But in their home in Leeds, Roseanne's mother. Pauline Animal rights campaigners said: "Oh dear - that is disapupporting the Wild Mammals pointing because he said to her he will vote for a ban in the House of Commons. That is a shame. She will be very very sad because she felt he was sympaing that the Government will thetic and that he did realise not be able to ignore their de- there was a lot of cruelty in-

Roseanne had gone to her The Bill was "talked out" local school leaving her mothto fox-bunting. The Campaign for the Protection of Hunted said: "We are delighted that the sition clear in his letter. We now feel that the Government are isters that there are enough going to have to respond to this

"Roseanne is disappointed, but it is now time for the Government to respond."

In the Chamber, the Bill died with a yell of defiance from the Labour MPs who had supportla warfare from the largely Tory opponents. As 2.30 pm arrived to stop debate, there were still

Michael Foster, the Labour lengthy queue, were it can be The failure of Mr Blair to blocked with the word "ob-

Mr Foster described his Bill day left Downing Street on the as "still alive and kicking" and defensive. "He is not able to said: "I think hunting with dogs vote for it today because of his will be banned by the end of this programme," said a spokesman. Parliament. We are not going to

Road-smash mother awarded £800,000 damages

A MOTHER-OF-TWO who has been left needing total care after a road accident was yesterday awarded £800,000 agreed damages. Hairdresser Vivien Hacking received catastrophic head injuries when a car driven by her husband Robert crashed on the A1 near Brampton, Cambridgeshire, in May 1994. Now in a state of "low awareness", she is paralysed apart

from slight movement in some fingers, her counsel Simon Fox told Mr Justice Buckley at the High Court in London. It is likely that Mrs Hacking, 52, will be cared for at a Sue

Ryder home, in Ely, Cambridgeshire, for the rest of her life. The judge approved the award against the insurers of Mr Hacking, who admitted liability.

Final judgment was adjourned while lawyers investigate setting up a structured settlement which would provide Mrs Hacking with a tax-free, inflation-proof income for life.

E.coli family wins legal aid

THE FAMILY of a victim of the world's worst E. coli foodpoisoning outbreak has been granted legal aid to appear at an inquiry into the 20 deaths. Solicitor Paul Santoni said he had been told his application had been granted on behalf of Mary Gardiner, 71, whose husband Alexander died. The fatal accident inquiry begins in Motherwell on 20 April.

Mr Gardiner, 69, attended a church lunch in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, in November 1996, where many elderly people were struck down by the E.coli 0157 bug. He died in Law Hospital on 27 November, 17 days after the outbreak began. The deaths continued until June last year

John Barr, of Wishaw, whose butcher shop was implicated in the outbreak, stood trial last year accused of culpable and reckless conduct over the supply of cooked meat, but the case collapsed with a ruling of no case to answer. In January, Mr Barr's business partnership was fined £2,250 for food hygiene and safety breaches.

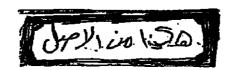
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Road-sweep lorry death

THE DRIVER of a road-sweeping lorry involved in an accident which left a 10-year-old girl dead and her three sisters injured, was yesterday charged with causing death by dangerous driving. A spokesman for West Midlands Police said that the 51-year-old man, of Brewood in Staffordshire, had been granted bail to appear before Wolverhampton magistrates on 15 April

Stephanie Popat and her sisters were on their way to get cash to buy Christmas presents on Friday 19 December last year when the accident happened near their family home in Bushbury, Wolverhampton.

Stephanie suffered massive injuries and was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital. Her sisters, Marie McCormack, 19, and Natalie Popat, 13, suffered head injuries, and threeyear-old Selina Shaw was treated for minor grazes and fa-



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breaks Global t ban warminise to gas to warming cool Dome

By Nicholas Schoon **Environment Correspondent**

ENVIRONMENTALISTS

against the Millennium Dome nounced that its huge air conditioning system would use an extremely powerful "greenhouse" gas.

The state-owned New Millennium Experience Company has selected a system using HFC which, molecule for molmore effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere.

That is wby HFC is one of six gases which developed nations, including Britain, agreed to curb at the Kyoto global warming summit in Japan just three months ago.

Now, Greenpeace is asking why the British government is specifying the gas for one of the biggest air-conditioning contracts it will ever award. "This is a very bad decision and we'll do everything we can to stop it being implemented," said Peter Melchett, Greenpeace UK's executive director.

The Dome is expected to need year-round air conditioning as thousands of people flock through its vast enclosed space. When the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC) advertised for a conthat HFC should be used. Now a major US company, Carrier, has won the £1.5m contract which will use nearly seven tonnes of HFC,

This was regarded as much HCFCs used in many conventional air-conditioning systems. on because they are destroying the Earth's protective ozone layer, which keeps out harmfulultra-violet radiation.

Yet HFC could make a major contribution to an even bigger environmental problem, global warming, if its use as a CFC-replacement continues to grow rapidly.

Yesterday the NMEC said Only one per cent of the gas would be allowed to leak out in a year. Chief executive Jennifer vowed to resume their battle Page said that being able to remove and sell the air condiyesterday, after it was an- tioning system once the year-long millennium exhibition was over was a key consideration. Whoever takes over the gigantic structure may well not need such a large system.

The Dome organisers also wanted air conditioning which was tried and tested and could ecule, is more than 1,000 times be installed quickly, rather than opting for something less orthodox which set new standards in protecting the environment.

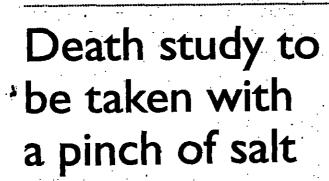
But the decision has come as a bitter disappointment to some UK air conditioning contractors and Greenpeace. It had hoped that John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment who played a leading role in brokering the Kyoto climate agreement - would intervene to stop HFCs being used.

In the end, he decided not to, confining himself to writing a letter to the minister in charge of the Dome, Peter Mandelson, which merely expressed disappointment at the choice of air conditioning system.

There are alternatives to HFCs, CFCs and HCFCs, which have been used in large office blocks in Britain, London tractor last summer, it specified Transport has two offices with air conditioners which use hydrocarbons.

Nick Cox, sales director with air conditioning firm Earth Care, said: "Using HFCs is like switching from high tar to low greener than the now banned tar cigarettes. The Dome [com-CFCs and soon-to-be-banned pany has] to America for the quickest, easiest option when they should have been proogy. It's a disappointment for UK industry and the environ-

Greenpeace had earlier threatened to disrupt the Dome's construction because it would have been roofed with PVC plastic, but the Government changed its mind and chose Teffon instead.



By Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

Salt is bad for you - or it may be good for you, depending on the latest scientific paper you

The link between salt and health is thrown into confusion today with the publication of a study suggesting that those who eat least die soonest.

Previous research has suggested that high consumption of salt increases the risk of early death and current UK government advice is to cut consumption by 30 per cent.

For the new study, researchers at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York examined details of the diets of over 11,000 Americans collected between 1971 and

The participants had been asked to record all they are in a 24-hour period.

· The researchers then examined death records for 1992 to see who had died in the intervening 20 years.

They found those with the highest salt intake - in the top quarter of the study group - had an 18 per cent lower death rate than those in the lowest

The results, published in The Lancer, are valuable, according to the researchers, because they link salt intake with eventual death rather than with blood pressure, as other studies have

done. They conclude that the results are not strong enough to justify advice to increase salt intake but they also "do not support current recommendations for routine reduction of sodium consumption."

UK scientists said the paper contained "misleading statements and methodological flaws" and said the practice of assessing salt intake on the basis of a "single dietary recall" was notoriously inaccurate.

Consensus Action on Salt and Hypertension, a group of scientists concerned with salt and its effects on health and which is led by Professor Graham MacGregor of St George's Hospital Medical School, said that there was "overwhelming evidence" that a high salt intake was a major cause of high blood pressure.

"Blood pressure is the most important predisposing factor to strokes and heart attacks, the commonest cause of death in the Western world."

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Nutrition Policy, set up to advise the Government, recommended in its report on heart disease that average salt intake in the UK should be reduced from nine grams to six

grams a day. Most salt is hidden in processed food and the scientists say that more must be done to reduce the salt content and to label it clearly in these



Knit one, clone one, for woolly winner

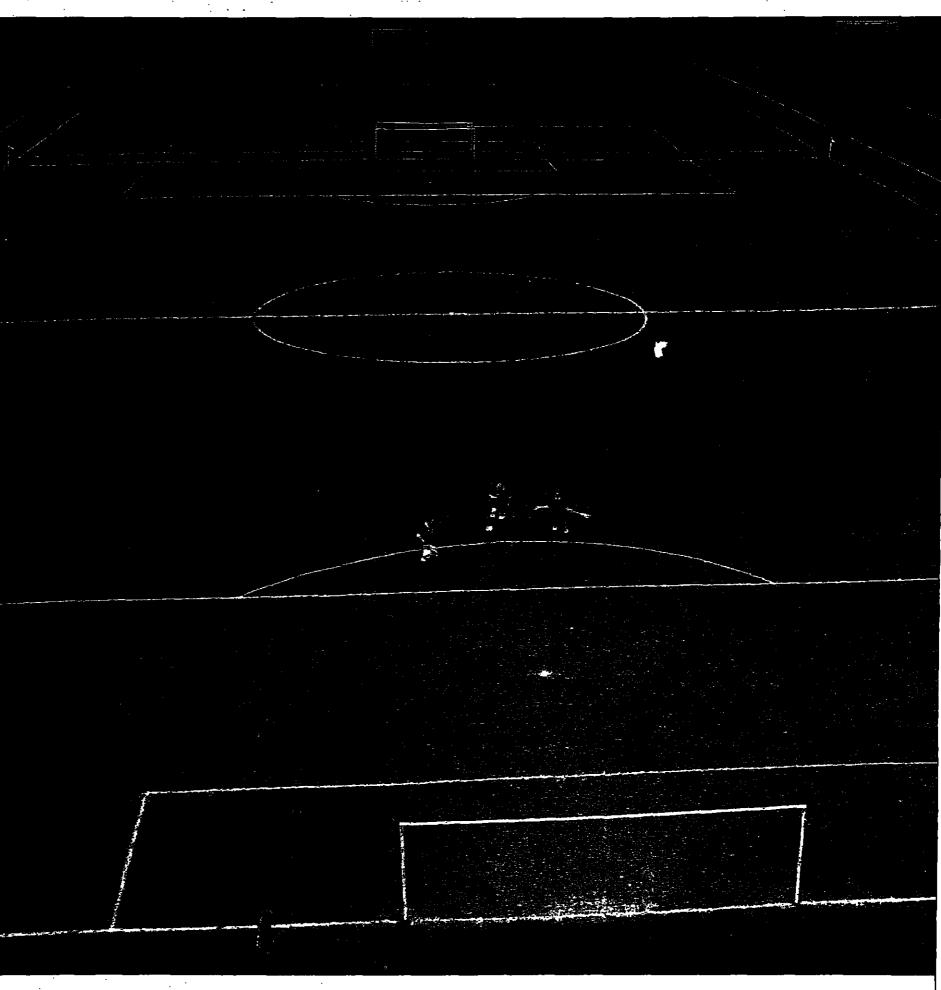
YOUNG designer Holly Wharton became a walking advert for National Science Week today when she donned a woolly jumper made from the fleece of Dolly, the cloned

Holly, 12, of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, won a national competition to design the sweater which was donated to the Science Museum in Loudon.

Actress Jenny Agntter, a carrier of the hereditary disease cystic fibrosis, said it was a great advert for the pioneering work of Dolly's creators and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust which belped organise the competition.

In foture it may be possible to engineer cloned sheep which produce AAT a protein used in the treatment of cystic fibrosis.

Holly's design featured two identical sheep happily grazing in a field and beat off patterns involving cable-knit in the form of DNA strands.



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First past the post is dead, says Ashdown

By Anthony Bevins Political Editor

PADDY Ashdown yesterday predicted that a new voting system would be in place before the next election.

On the eve of his party's spring assembly in Southport, this weekend, the Liberal Democrat leader said: "Two years ago we were the third party of government at the local level in this country; now we're the second party."

But he then added in an in-

terview with BBC Radio 4's Today programme that although the electoral system remained the same, "we shall change it at national level in the next three or four years, which will make our chances of growth and progress even better".

Given the size of the Government's majority, it is likely that Mr Blair will go for his full, five-year term before he calls an election in 2002 - in which case Mr Ashdown appears to expect to have a new voting system in place for that poll.

But Labour's manifesto only promises a referendum - not enactment. It says: "We are committed to a referendum on the voting system for the House of Commons. An independent commission on voting systems will be appointed early to recommend a proportional alternative to the first-past-the-post

That commission has already been set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the former Labour

Social Democratic Party, and is due to report later this year, but there has been no public commitment to early legislation.

Ten years after the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party merged, the party today debates a new strategy document, No Glass Ceilines, in which it is argued that there need be no limit to the party's aspirations. Certainly, Mr Ashdown sees no reason the Liberal Democrats should not at some point form a govern-

Meanwhile, the policy paper says that "the strategy of constructive opposition" to Labour should be maintained.

In that vein, Malcolm Bruce, the party's Treasury spokesman. will tell the assembly this morning that Gordon Brown, Chan-

start spending some of the Government's £200bn "war-chest", heiping to deliver Labour's pledges on health, education and crime.

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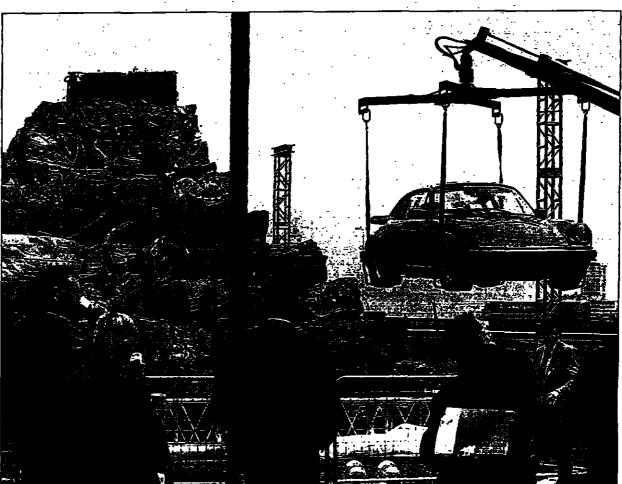
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But an article in the conference edition of the party magazine, The Reformer, says today that there is a danger: now that the Government is well on the way to delivering significant changes to the constitution, it could also satisfy demands for more investment in the public services - wiping out another Liberal Democrat demand.

In that case, the magazine says, the Liberal Democrats would need to carve out a distinctive policy stance on other issues, like education and environment policy, welfare reform, and Europe.

Crushing blow for tax dodgers



Flat fee: Baroness Hayman (below) witnessed what happens to vehicles that have no car tax Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

She launched a new Government crackdown on cheats tion if it's a good car or it's who are costing the Treasury £175 million a year – and showed what could happen if

people did not pay up. "Road tax dodgers cost the national this autumn. public tens of millions of pounds every year. And all too often the vehicles are not insured or MoT tested either.

"I think a lot of people resent the fact that while 95 per cent pay there are 5 per cent

The Driving and Vehicle Li-

Minister Haydn Madoc explained: "First Baroness Hayman unveiled a a car without a disc is clamped pyramid of 500 crushed cars to- and if no one gets in touch afday as a warning to road tax ter 24 hours it's taken away. Then if it's not claimed after five weeks we either sell it at auc-

> The DVLA's wheel-clamping scheme was launched only in London last August, but will go Mr Madoc presented the

scrapped.'

Minister with a cheque for £4.4 million which has been raised by convincing dodgers in London to get their discs.

Baroness Hayman told a news conference in front of the 30ft mountain of metal at a police vehicle pound in Vauxhall, censing Agency's head officer south London: "More than the

pleased with the money we've raised by convincing people to pay once we've caught them." And she added: "I'm told

cars we've crushed, I'm most

out of road tax application forms in the two weeks after the scheme was launched there."

In the early phase of the plan more than 2,000 vehicles were wheel-clamped. And more than 40,000 evaders voluntarily re-licensed their vehicles.

The latest scheme costs £5 million and Mr Madoc said they hoped to multiply the £4.4 million clawed back so far by at least four or five times. Tax disc offenders have to pay £68 to get their vehicles de-clamped or at least £135 to get them out of the pound. They also face storage fees of £12 a day.

Cheats also face prosecution of up to £1,000 for a car or motorcycle and up to £25,000 for that Post Offices in London ran a heavy goods vehicle.

Ban on diabetic Sinn Fein can drivers to stay

THE Government yesterday disclosed that it had checked and doubled checked medical advice over a ban on diabetics driving lorries or buses, as it faced pleas to ease enforcement of the rules.

Junior transport minister Baroness Hayman, speaking amid calls for a review of European Union rules which ban all from insulin-dependent diabetics driving such vehicles, pledged to investigate the regime in other EU states after concern that they were not implementing the measure as zeal-

ously as in Britain. She told the House of Lords in a debate that the expert panel on diabetes was asked if those diabetics who had not suffered a hypoglycaemic attack a collapse - could be categorised as not a road risk. But the panel's advice was that unthe risk of hypoglycaemia "are not eliminated and may even be

She spoke of claims that in-

ernment could have rejected it. She had no illusions about the strength of feeling among drivers who felt their own condition was under control and tinderstood their concerns.

the road".

to a loss of consciousness "with-

The minister said that faced

was difficult to see how the Gov-

Lady Hayman said that in the last three months there had been 40 accidents involving collanse at the wheel by insulin dependent diabetics. The risk of an insulin-dependent diahetic having a "hypo" attack was calculated at one in ten.

The advisory panel will meet at the end of April to consider der modern treatment methods representations from the British Diabetic Association and the Commons all-party group on diincreased rather than reduced". abetes on introducing an individual assessment programme solin treatment could lead to hy- for those affected by the rules. February 20 on everything that hind the peace process.

stay - Mowlam

MO Mowlam, the Secretary of had happened before that. Mr out warning", and it was that which "poses the greatest risk on with "clear and unequivocal" ad-IRA elements for another revice from the professionals, it cent murder.

> back in the Stormont talks on no more conclusive evidence. 23 March, following its suspension due to IRA involvement in two anurders.

tion, Ms Mowlam said yester- volvement in the Conway day that she did not plan a murder, she added: "I have no further Sinn Fein exclusion de- conclusive evidence to suggest spite her security minister say- that I will take action. I am ining in a House of Commons dicating that I won't." written reply this week that he of Co Armagh man Kevin Con-idence I have suggests it holds." way last month.

During a visit to London-

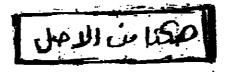
State for Northern Ireland, is Conway was murdered on Febnot planning to take action to ruary 18. We took everything expel Sinn Fein from the North- into account and Sinn Fein ern Ireland peace talks again de- were excluded. We now, after a spite the Government blaming period of exclusion, invited them back in."

She said she had acted on the Sinn Fein is expected to be evidence available and she had

Pressed on whether she would take fresh action against Sinn Fein if she received con-Despite Unionist calls for ac-clusive evidence of IRA in-

She said she had no conclubelieved "IRA elements" were sive evidence that the IRA involved in a third morder - that ceasefire has broken. "All the ev-

Her comments fuelled speculation that the IRA leadership derry she said she had no con- has lost control of its north Arclusive evidence Mr Conway's magh brigade - always one of marder was "TRA authorised". the most militant - despite the Ms Mowlam said: "We took insistence of the republican action against Sinn Fein on movement that it is totally be-



We use Shylock as a weapon against racism, say teachers



Education Correspondent

ENGLISH teachers leapt to the defence of the Bard yesterday despite a survey which found teachers worldwide shunning The Merchant of Venice as anti-Semitic. In the survey of more than 1,000 teachers in Britain, Germany, Australia and the United States, 5 per cent thought the work about Shylock, a moneylender, should not be taught, while 40 per cent deemed the play anti-Semitic.

The survey was commissioned by the Globe Theatre, the replica of the house that staged Shakespeare's works. which is producing the play as part of its 1998 season.

The play, written in 1596, has been controversial for generations. It has prompted walk-outs and protests at productions in Israel and was suggested as one reason why the Bard's face was left off euro banknotes. However, it is firmly established in schools. It is



even used as an introduction to Shakespeare for children as young as 10.

Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said: "The play can be read and studied on different levels. It is true that the whole business of Shylock is complex and the area of Elizabethan anti-Semitism is odd to 20thcentury readers. You have to be very confident about your ability to teach these issues of racism and prejudice, and you need to know your kids well."

Richard Wilcocks, of Bruntcliffe High School in Morley, near Leeds, teaches the play to 14-year-old GCSE pupils. He said: "It's a good opportunity to teach about anti-Semitism They are very involved in the play and are learning a lot."

The Globe is running a project to work on the play with south-east London schools. Alastair Tallon, of the theatre's education unit, said: "If we do not perform and teach the play, how do we deal with other people's prejudices? Racism is very much on the agenda because the British National Party and the National Front are strong in these areas and we hope schools use this to confront that,"

St Saviour's and St Olave's School, a girl's school in Southwark, is participating in the project. The headteacher, Irene Bishop, said: "Young people are not stupid. They know there are racists around and just because there are racists in a play it does not mean we should not address

dodgers

powers to check sex offenders

POLICE will be able to use new powers to stop a threat to children by 150 sex offenders who are due to be released from custody without supervision over the next two years.

dophiles were due to be police chief could apply for a sex to see to reassure the public that action could be taken to

Home Office sources last could be imposed on sex offenders by chief constables, if they presented a threat to chil-

As the Government faced mounting anger, a spokesman for Government recognises the public concern about protecting children from paedophiles ... The police and probation service have a role to play."

The police and the probation service expressed anxiety about the pending releases. But Downing Street said the police would be expected to use the powers in new legislation to tackle sex to children. Extended supervision is part of the Crime and Disorder Bill, which should become law by the autumn.

There was confusion over the powers that will be available to the police after confirmation by Bill should be amended so "sex Alun Michael, a Home Office minister, that the Government was powerless to stop the sex offenders being allowed out of custody without supervision.

The law cannot turn the clock back and increase the punishment that was given at the time. I think the instincts of

everybody is that should happen," Mr Michael said. But the Home Office source said: "It will be possible for a sex offender order to apply to these

demonstrate that they may be a danger to public to be retrimed The public outcry at the distribution to jail for up to six months. The clesure that notorious pair Downing Street spokesman said offender order under the Bill in the believe the SE offenders

> threat. "They could stop known into a play ground."

But the spokesman added: night confirmed that new orders "It is impossible to have retrospective legislation in this respect. You cannot apply additional punishments to people retrospectively when they have served their sentence."

> paedophile Howard Hughes, should never be allowed out of iail. He backed a system used in some American states where paedophiles are assessed for risk at the end of their sentence and if they are still judged to be dangerous, they are given an additional prison term.

The Crime and Disorder

Police get

It will allow offenders who

believing in a way that pose protect children in certain sex offenders from standing areas such as schools and play- outside school gates, or going

Chris Hook, whose daughthe Prime Minister said: "The ter Sophie was murdered by said dangerous sex offenders

Paul Cavadino, principal offenders, if they posed a threat officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said supervision of paedophiles after release was "crucial" to stop them reoffending.

> offender orders" could include compulsory supervision, he said. Tory MP Nicholas Winterton

> called for "urgent action" from the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. But the former Conservative prisons minister, Ann Widdecombe, said: "We should keep things in proportion."

DAILY POEM

"Lithium"

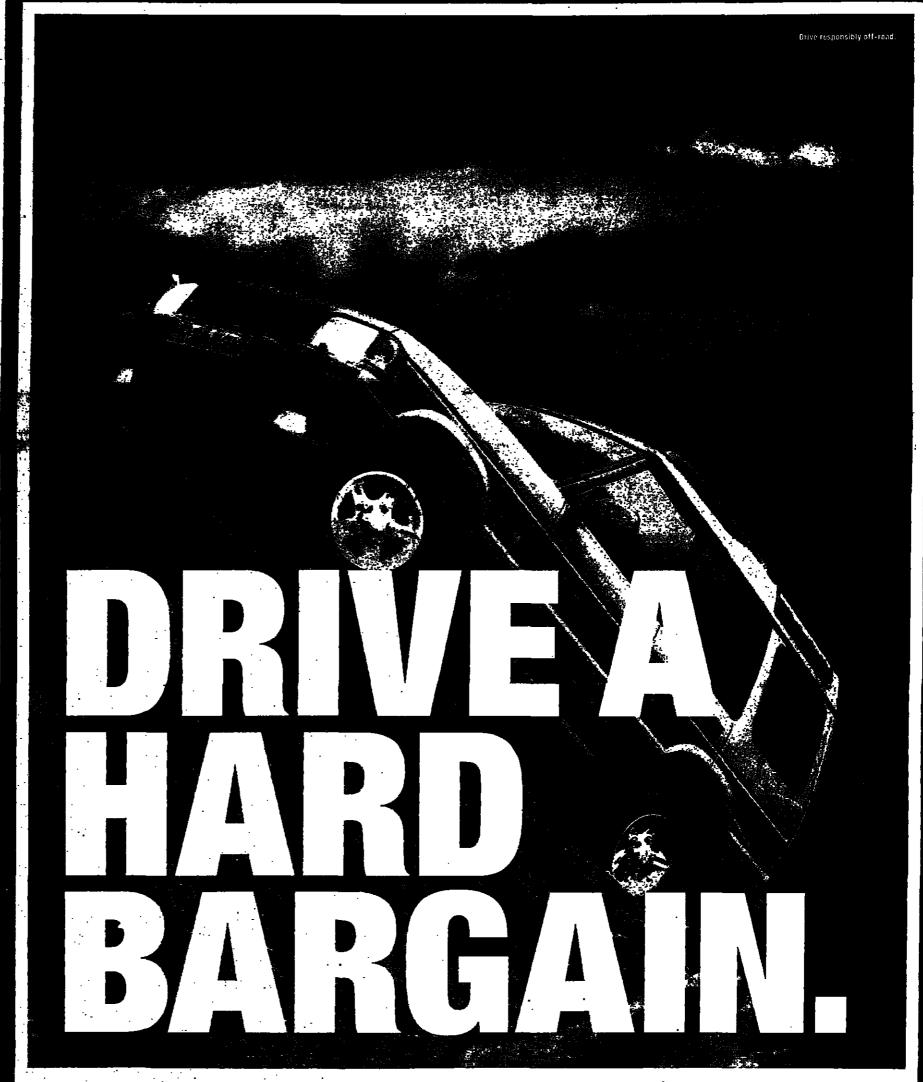
in can

4owlam

by Robin Robertson

After the arc of ECT and the blunt concussion of pills, they gave him lithium to cling to the psychiatrist's stone. A metal that floats on water, must be kept in kerosene. can be drawn into wire. (He who had jumped in the harbour, burnt his hair offbeen caught hanging from the light.) He'd heard it was once used to make hydrogen bombs, but now was a coolant for nuclear reactors, so he broke out of hospital barefoot and walked ten miles to meet me in the snow.

"Lithium" comes from Penguin Modern Poets 13 (Penguin, £7.99), which will be the last volume in this influential series. It contains a selection from the work of Michael Hofmann, Michael Longley and Robm Robertson, chosen by the poets



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IN HOME

Secrecy blamed for scale of BSE crisis

Winners and losers

By Charles Arthur Science Editor

A LEADING scientist will tell the BSE Inquiry next week that it might have been possible to when he formally approached. prevent almost a quarter of the total cases of "mad cow disease" if the Government had not refused him access to its data.

Instead, the crisis caused by bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle cost the UK nearly £1bn in the year after March 1996, according to an independent report published yesterday. It found, though, that job losses and the impact on the economy were less severe than predicted, because of government subsidies and compensation, and a change in

people's shopping habits. On Monday, the BSE In-

quiry panel will hear evidence from Professor Roy Anderson of Oxford University, who has submitted written testimony that he was repeatedly rebuffed the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Maff) from 1989 to 1991, offering to make an independent analysis of the BSE epidemic.

Professor Anderson runs a world-class group of scientists specialising in analysis of infectious epidemics, and says he was "somewhat frustrated" by Maff's refusal to give him access to its BSE database.

If his techniques had been applied then they would have shown that the ministry's ban on feeding BSE infected food to. cows was failing, and allowed them to take appropriate action.

"The size of the epidemic would have been significantly smaller, by about a quarter of a million infected cattle," he says in his written submission to the in-

When he was finally given access to the database, in June 1996, he calculated that a total of 1 million cattle had been infected with the disease, of which

How the BSE crisis affected dif-

could switch to non-beef prod-

Renderers and abattoirs covered

by government compensation

ferent groups and areas:

WINNERS

only 160,000 cases were actually diagnosed. Scientist now believe that the

24 deaths from "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in Britain were caused by eating BSE-infected food. A spokesman for Maff said the ministry would not comment on Professor Anderson's statement at this time: "We are going to let

Dairy farms (in short term).

Specialist exporters of meat

Cold stores:

Specialist hautiers:

LOSERS

the inquiry take its course. If have their chance to answer it."

Meanwhile, yesterday's report, Economic Impact of BSE the UK Economy, said the UK beef industry suffered only modest falls in output and jobs between 1996 and 1997.

The report, commissioned by the previous government esti-

livestock and genetic material

Specialist beef and mixed live

such as buil semen;

MIXED FORTI INES

Feedstuff suppliers;

Auction markets.

stock farmers.

there's criticism, people will economy in the first 12 months after the onset of the BSE crisis was between £740m and £980m - substantially lower than earlier estimates, following

> British beef and beef products. Early predictions of 46,000 job losses were substantially reduced by support to the food

ACROSS THE UK

England: North, major loss;

South West, significant loss;

West Midlands, significant loss;

Midlands, small loss; South East,

neutral; Yorkshire & Humber-

side, net gain; East Anglia, large

net gain. Scotland: major loss

North West, small loss; East

sis broke in March 1996. But Stephen Nicol, a co-author of the report, warned: "The future impacts of the BSE a 36 per cent fall in demand for crisis, in job and income terms, on some sectors - particularly beef farmers, abattons and part of the marketing chain such as auction markets - are likely to

1,000 people lost their jobs in

the 12 months after the BSE cri-

those impacts that had occurred up to the middle of 1997." At that time, wholesalers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers switched to other UK meat products as an alternative to beef, expanding output and employment elsewhere

in the UK economy, they said. The authors estimated that

mated that the net loss to the industry. Instead, no more than half and two-thirds of the potential impact of the crisis on the economy. And the £1.5bn of subsidy and compensation payments to farmers, abattoirs and other food businesses did "largely compensate" for the

loss of output. Though abattous were hit hard - particularly by the loss of the export market - their profit margins actually rose, helped by compensation payments and be significantly greater than a fall in cattle prices.

> Meat processors received no compensation and were forced to switch to imported beef and to change their recipes - raising costs and depressing sales and profits.

Regionally, the biggest losers were in Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland, and parts of the switch offset between a northern and south-west England.



Upper crust toasts aristocrat studbook

THEY are the obscure, the exiled, the dispossessed. With the exception of a few notables, the glorious heyday of European and South American royalty is long past.

But at a ceremony on Monday in the suitably traditional upper-crust surroundings of Claridge's Hotel, London, the international crème de la crème will be able to raise a toast in their own honour once more.

Their pedigrees have been compiled for the first time in 54 years for a new edition of the 235-veat-old Almanac de Gotha, which was once the social bible for the monarchies of the world.

the "traditional diplomatic set of the former GDR. tongue". For the blue-blooded, Photograph: Renters Greece met her future husband, terests, but decided against as a distant kinsman of the ex- in there."

gone back into print, writes Louise Jury

The guidebook to European royalty has

asked: "But how are we related?" It is claimed her mother responded with a copy of the

Royalty magazine observed this month: "The Almanac de Gotha ... is the last and undisputed word on who is who. The royal libraries of Europe have been stocked with its editions since 1763. It is the nearest thing to a trades union when it comes to settling questions or disputes." The almanac had been The 671-page volume will be owned and published by the in English for the first time, as Perthes family of the tiny Duchy the authors believe the Ian- of Saze-Coburg and Gotha, unguage has superseded French as till it became a nationalised as-

In the wake of the reunifithe importance of the almanac cation of Germany, the family, should not be under-estimated. under Stephan Perthes, bas re-When Princess Alexandra of sumed its various publishing in-

King Peter II of Yugoslavia, she updating 50 years of royal births and deaths itself.

Charlotte Pike, 38, a former Burke's Peerage researcher, and John Kennedy, 32, a former private secretary to Prince 1991. Michael of Kent, took over the

After half a century without publication, Prince Charles as well as his sons William and Harry, will be among the royals taking their place in the volume for the first time. Others will include Maya Flick, the divorced wife of Mercedes heir Friedrich Flick. and her sister, Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis, dubbed the "Punk Princess". They are both members of the Schonburg-Glauchau family.

Belgrade-born John Kennedy may be regarded as having a and off, mainly for historical repersonal interest. Described



hn Kennedy: Author

iled Yugoslav royal family. he helped arrange a high-profile visit to Belgrade by exiled members of the family in

In 1992, Mr Kennedy, who has stood for Parliament for the Conservatives, was hailed as the "Kissinger of Yugoslavia" by Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, for his peace efforts in the Bosnian

Copies of the earlier editions of the almanac still exist. The central reference library in Westminster, London, has many volumes from between 1775 and 1941, although not the last, published in 1944. A spokesman said: "It is used, on search. There's fascinating stuff

Boy in train stabbing sent to Broadmoor

A TEENAGER was sent to Broadmoor high security hospital for mental health assessment yesterday after savagely knifing a young woman in the head while they were on a train. Robert Buckland, 18, of no fixed address, was convicted last January of the attempted murder of Alison Kennedy, 28. Ms Kennedy, a charity worker from Northern Ireland, was travelling in a deserted carriage to see her sister in Surrey in March last vear when Buckland attacked her from behind, embedding a Bowie-style hunting knife deep

into her skull. Judge Gcoffrey Grigson said at the Old Bailey in London yesterday today that doctors were satisfied Buckland was suffering from mental iliness and the condition was susceptible to treatment. He would therefore make an interim order that the 18-year-

fendant as young as you, given the horrific nature of the crime. my prime duty is to protect the

Buckland had fantasized about knifing a woman in the head while still at school the court had been told. When he spotted Ms Kennedy sitting alone in a carriage, he had found his real-life victim. She is still suffering physical and psychological effects from the attack.

Judge Grigson told Buckland: You should understand whatever conclusion the doctors come to, it is for the court to decide at the end of the day, whether such an order is a suitable means of dealing with you."

He had heard from Dr David Mawson, consultant psychiatrist at Broadmoor, that there was "much to be learned about the defendant - many important background details need to be



Alison Kennedy and her attacker, Robery Buckland

Ms Kennedy. When she turned and rose from her seat, holding the knife in her head, he ran away scared and tried to jump from the train, the court had five-inch blade still in her skull. Although she will never fully real, she said she felt "a great rough. He was on his way to sense of relief at the result and a great sense of satisfaction to to die in the attack.

Buckland had intended to kill arts festival co-ordinator after obtaining a degree in arts and design and completing a postreturned to work for the Multiple Scierosis Society in Northern been told during his trial. Ms Ireland as an education officer Kennedy was left to stagger last year and was described as "a along the train for help with the dedicated and forward planning young person".

Buckland had left home at 16 cover, Ms Kennedy now hopes after trouble with his stepshe can get on with her life. Im- mother but by March last year mediately after Buckland's tri- he was fed up with sleeping Guildford to seek a bed for the night when he spotted Ms wounding her with intent to cause grievous bodily harm,



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researched ... We do not know be here to see it for myself". She Kennedy. He had admitted old should be examined at yet the purpose, the motive besaid she thought she was going Broadmoor for a minimum of 12 hind the attack and the nature weeks, before being sentenced. But he added: "Even with a de-She had worked in London as an but denied attempted murder. Cricket official in abortion row apology

THE ENGLAND cricket offiindustrial tribunal abortion row, part in the controversy.

Nick Marriner's apology followed a tribunal ruling that former Lord's receptionist Theresa Harrild, with whom he not the ECB. had a brief affair, was the vic-Harrild claimed Mr Marriner hullied her into having an abortion, complaining that he was

too young to be a father. Mr Marriner, 25, returned to work yesterday at Lord's Cricket Ground, where he has been employed for over two years as a devalopment executive for the

England and Wales Cricket cial at the centre of this week's Board. In a brief statement he said: "I am deeply sorry for apologised yesterday for his the part that I played in this unfortunate episode. I would like to make it absolutely clear that it was me that paid for Theresa Harrild's abortion and.

"I have worked with cricket tim of sex discrimination. Ms for two-and-a-half years and I thoroughly enjoy my job assisting with the development of the game. I now want to put all this behind me."

The tribunal was told that Mr Marriner refused to discuss the pregnancy with his formergirlfriend and asked Sarah Bladon, marketing secretary



Theresa Harrild: Pressured

with the ECB, to persuade her to have a termination. Ms Harrild says she was handed £400 many of the allegations made in a brown envelope and told to

wanted to keep. On Wednesday, Ms Harrild, 32, won a claim for sexual discrimination after a panel at the central London tribunal accepted that she had been pressured into having an abortion and was unlawfully dismissed The England and Wales

abort the child - which she

Cricket Board could now be ordered to pay her £10,000 compensation. Tim Lamb, the board's chief executive, has maintained that the board acted sympathetically to Ms Hare rild's personal position and said against it had been "hurtful".

Cardiff takes prize in tale of two cities

By Kim Sengupta

THE LONG wait to discover the site of the National Assembly for Wales ended yesterday with victory for Cardiff, other contender, Swansea.

The precise location of the design competition between two sites in the city, on the Cardiff Bay waterfront and

Central railway station.

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, said battle for the assembly had been "a tale of two cities", but the case and disappointment for the for it to be sited in the Weish capital was just too compelling.
"In making this decision, I

building will be decided by a am mindful that Wales has invested 40 years in promoting Cardiff as our capital city. We are a small country and must

"Cardiff is established now not only as the capital of Wales, but as a leading administrative and financial centre which this year will host the European summit and, in 1999. the Rugby World Cup."

Civic leaders in Swansea had complained that Cardiff seemed always to get preferential treatment, and making sembly could have rectified this thing is built.

Mike Hedges, leader of the Swansea council, insisted the choice of Cardiff would cost the taxpayer more. The Swansea Guildhall had been offered for £3m, he said, "The

have to wait and see what the

Cardiff option will have to be done within £ 17m, that's the government limit, but we will

"It's great disappointment that we lost and I am sure that y Secombe, the actress Cath-Russell Goodway, the leader of Cardiff council, will have a big smile on his face ... We have proved at least that Swansea is deserving of more investment. it would be nice to be getting the £43m year by year that

Cardiff Bay is getting". The Swansea bid had been

Welsh celebrities like Sir Harerine Zeta Jones, and West

Ham footballer John Hartson. The Welsh Office had been negotiating with Cardiff council over the possible purchase of the elegant Edwardian City Hall for the assembly.

Talks broke down, however, when Labour councillors re-

by 120,000 people including of £3.5m and demanded £14.5m to take into account the cost of transferring council staff to other offices in the city. Announcing the competi-

tion, Mr Davies said it was essential that Wales looked forwards, not backwards. "I want this new building to be a symbol of our new democ-

racy as we go forward with

confidence into the next

Bute Square, near Cardiff build upon our achievement to their city the home of the as- cost is going to be when every- supported by a petition signed fused the Government's offer millennium. The new landmark will capture the imagination of the people of Wales."

*Will the G

The assembly headquarters is scheduled to be finished by May 2000, and, Mr Davies insisted, the £ 17m ceiling will be strictly adhered to. In the meantime, the first meeting of the 60-member assembly will take place in the University of Wales Court Building following elections next May.

Aerodynamic handbag launches Chanel into next millennium



ın Paris

IT WAS NOT so much of a fashion show yesterday at Chanel in Paris, but a bag show. The sloppy tweed suits and clocke bats made some of the models look like bag ladies; but the big talking point of the show was the New Chanel Bag.

It is not quilted, and it does not have a gold chain. Instead, it is a hard brute of an object that resembles an aeropiane headrest. According to Karl Lagerfeld, the bag is aerodynamic and designed to take the house into the next millennium. Its name? The 2005. It looks so odd that it might take customers longer than that to get used to it: "It's totally new age," he said. "I have never seen anything like it."

The inspiration for the bag was the female torso, turned upside down, although for the pear-shaped Briton, it looks like. the area between waist and bot-



Yesterday in Paris: Above left, Chanel's 2005 superbag on the catwalk. Above, Vivienne Westwood with models at the end of her '98/'99 show Photographs: Ben Elwes/Jack Dabaghian

breasts and a small waist. Like some sort of Nasa spacecraft, it has been cloaked in strict secrecy for the past year. It is supposed to be "body friendly", featherlight and made to hug any part of the body. According to the designer himself, "you could use it as a pillow on an aeroplane".

The battle for the lucrative bag market is fierce now that Louis Vuitton has a slick new designer providing a collection of pearlised blue and peach handbags and wrist bags, and Hermes has the avant garde, hipper-thauhip designer, Martin Margiela, to

panies, Celine and Loewe, join the fray this weekend with brand new American designers to give their bag sales a boost. Michael Kors shows his collection for Celine today, and Narciso Rodriguez presents the first clothing collection for Loewe on Sunday.

The handbag has become more of a status symbol than it ever was in the Eighties; there are women who will join waiting lists for the sake of a £5,500 crocodile handbag by Dior.

The 2005 will take some getting used to. But the su- available at a market stall near tom. The right way up, it has two pump up sales of the Kelly hag, perbag will certainly give you soon.

Two other leatherware com- Chanel's sales a new lease of life, while the clothes for autumn/winter '98/'99 look a tad dowdy. There is a shop in Paris called Didier Ludot that specia. ses in vintage Chanel, and this collection would not have looked out of place there. The cloche hats gave the tweedy suits and oversized iridescent pearls worn around the neck a tired and dated look.

Meanwhile, the people who specialise in counterfeit goods will be running up their own versions of the 2005 to be



Colour match: A model wearing Kenzo's red ensemble with embroidered coat and top in his 1998/99 autumn/winter show in Paris yesterday

Publicity is off the menu for Hirst

By Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

DAMTEN HIRST, the artist turned restaurateur, has been denied what promised to be a publicity coup for his fashion-able caterie in Notting Hill, west London.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has dropped its threat to prosecute the restaurant, Pharmacy, which masquerades as a chemists shop. The society said the restaurant had "knowingly flouted the law" by adopting the name Pharmacy which is a criminal offence under the Medicines Act 1968.

It had reluctantly decided to defer prosecution because "no penalty is available at present that is likely to deter the owners from using the name." The maximum fine under the act is £1,000 - a fraction of what the publicity caused by such a case would have been worth.

Charles Pullan, manager of the £1.5 million restaurant whose shelves of medicines have been communing shoppers trying to get their prescriptions filled, said be was disappointed. We are very upset. It was quite an exciting, fun thing going on in the background. We never thought the the Royal Pharmacentical Society would get very far."

John Perguson, secretary of the Royal Pharmaceutical Soing an urgent meeting with the health department. He said: " There is a serious issue here. Parliament restricted the title "pharmacy" so that, when people need medicines they know where to get a professional service and are protected from unscrupulous practices and dabious products. The council is determined to find a way to

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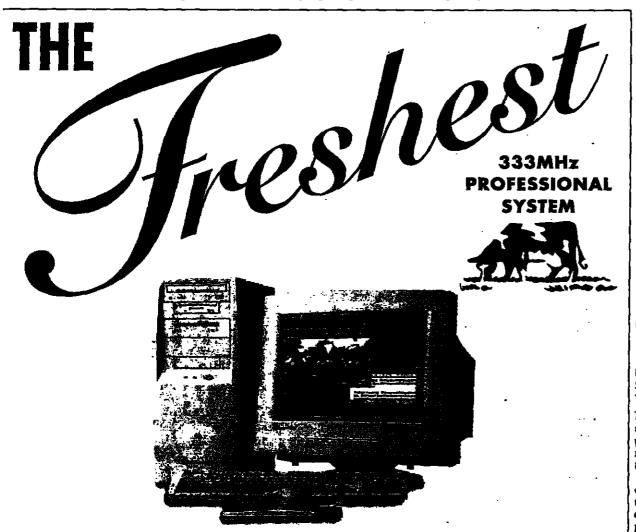
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Colleges need 25,000 places for childcare

By Glenda Cooper Social Affairs Correspondent

FURTHER education needs at least 25,000 new childcare places if it is to meet the demand from students according to the latest survey.

Some colleges believe they could fill their places three times over if they were to cut childcare fees and advertise places more widely says FE Now, the magazine for the further education sector.

Almost two-thirds of colleges say that if they increased the childcare they provide they could recruit more students and prevent more of them dropping out. No one knows the exact amount of childcare places provided by further education. although the Further Education Punding Council allocates £3m to 13,000 students. However some colleges use their gener-

al funds to spend more. The Daycare Trust is planning a national audit of childcare in further and higher education. It is expected to lead to a database of all college childcare provision and a telephone hotline for parents seek-

ing places by the year 2000. The FE Now survey of 150 colleges found wide discrepancy in the number of places offered by establishments. One in four colleges have no childcare places at all. Some colleges have childcare places for one in



20 students others have one place for one student in 400. Overall, colleges feel that there is an immediate demand for a 50 per cent increase in childcare.

More than a third only offer places for children over two years old which is likely to be because of the extra staff and space needed for younger children. Some 45 per cent of colleges did have places for six-month-old babies whereas only 30 per cent had places for

babies from three months. Cost is the crucial factor for many students, because at present they cannot claim for help if they are in fall time education.

"If you offer a course for free to people on benefit," says Pene Prior, student services manager at Swindon College, "but then charge £1.25 an hour then you have put it out of their reach again. We wouldn't dare advertise free childcare because we know the demand would be overwhelming."

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Will the Gaullists deal with the Devil?

The French centre-right is tempted to negotiate with Le Pen. John Lichfield, in Vitrolles, asks whether the moderates will sell their souls

PORTENTOUS choral music. Flashing red, white and blue lights. Dramatic hush. Everyone looks to the right of the auditorium. The Great Man, asserting his greatness, strides in from the left, flanked by his bodyguards in jump-suits. Thunderous applause, rhythmic chanting, dancing in the aisles.

The Great Man is a short, balding, effeminate figure in a blue suit and a colourful tie; he looks like a young Hercule Poirot, at once compelling and slightly absurd. He is Bruno Mégret, the second power (and rising) on the French far-right. He gives an effective speech, full of the usual mockery and paranoia and coded racism of the National Front. His central message - before tomorrow's regional and local elections - is "everything is going our way".

The sub-text is: "everything. is going my way." The most obvious victors in tomorrow's elections, covering 22 French regions and 96 départements, the Left. Ten months after coming to power in a general election, the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, should be able to claim victory in 17 out of the 22 regional contests.

centre-right parties won in 20 regions, foreshadowing their year. Mitterrandism was dead, said the pundits; the Left was likely to fall to the Left.



out of power for a generation. But six years later the Socialists, and their Communist and Green allies, are on the point levers of national and regional political power in France.

The only significant exception is the presidency, held by Jacques Chirac, the Gaullist, until 2002. But even Mr Chirac's In the last poll of its kind, in stronghold is predicted to dis-1992 the Left was flattened: the appear beneath the pink-redthe greater Paris area has been crushing victory in the parlia- the political and financial playmentary election the following ground of Mr Chirac's RPR par- ideas, leadership and fresh faces. regional president. ty for 26 years: tomorrow it is

The predicted success of the Socialists and their allies is a tribute to the skill of Mr Jospin in finessing budgetary problems plus overseas territories, will be of taking over virtually all the and keeping his troublesome alliance together. It is also a symptom of a rising economic barometer in France. It owes something, equally, to the incompetence of the centre-right parties, who have run a woefully flat and empty campaign. President Chirac's popularity is soar-

It does not take a math-

work out that there is another, darker, explanation for the Left's likely success. The National Front is predicted to gain its highest ever score - 16 coalition will win the elections. per cent - in regional elections. In 15 of the 17 regions in which the Left will top the poll, the NF will hold the balance of power. In this region - Provence-

Alpes-Côte d'Azur - there is a close, three-horse race and an outside chance that the National green tide. The Ile-de-France, ing with the economy but his Front will top the poll. This friends and fraternal enemies on; sould - although it is unlikely the centre-right remain bereft of : - make Jean-Marie Le Pen the

In other words, a majority of ematical genius, however, to woters in almost all French re- in splitting the anti-Left vote. week. As usual, he prefers to dis- ty's last big regional rally.

gions will vote for right-wing parties tomorrow, but the vote will be split between traditional right and far right and the left-wing

The leaders of the centreright parties are refusing adamantly to work with the National Front, which is almost the only thing to their credit. They will therefore have to work with left-wing minority regional governments all over France.

Something similar happened the parliamentary elections sembly to the success of the NF

Gauging the real or poten- tance himself from possible failtial strength of the Far Right in ure, rather than fight for victo-France is a difficult business; there are many reasons to be-This compares sharply with lieve, and hope, that the Na-

the tireless efforts of his Numtional Front may have reached ber Two and undeclared rival. Bruno Mégret, who has been its high-water mark. Disapproval of the NF remains huge working the ground in the (well over 70 per cent). The Bouches-de-Rhone (greater Marseilles) area for months. economy is recovering. Jean-Marie Le Pen faces more dis- The victory last year of his wife, Catherine, in the mayoral sension within the party than ever before. He has run a poor, election in Vitrolles, in the and lazy, campaign for the pres-northern outer suburbs of Maridency of the Greater Provence seilles, makes Mégret a greater last year. Mr Jospin owes his region, Despite the closeness of hero in these parts than Le Pen. himself, as the man who could majority in the National As- the polls, he has made no ap- The name of the NF leader was pull the whole of the French pearance in the South in the last scarcely mentioned at the par- anti-Left together and reposition

Bad dream team: Catherine and Bruno Mégret waving to the crowds as they arrive in Vitrolles for a National Front campaign meeting.

The success of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extremist party has split the rightwing vote across France, allowing the Socialists to gain victory after victory

Photograph: Reuters

Whatever its internal difficulties, the NF now sprawls across enough political territory to make life difficult for the traditional Right. This is frustrating for the grass-roots and, increasingly, a temptation.

Throughout this campaign, there have been angry centre-right noises demanding freedom to make deals with the NF after the election. These voices, especially strident in the lle-de-France and here in the Midi, have been shouted down by the party leaderships, which insist that the NF is beyond the moral and political pale.

At his final rally in Vitrolles. Mr Mégret predicted that this position would become untenable: he said many centre-right regional councillors would, in a close vote, support the NF, not the Left. Hence his comment: We have not yet won the electoral battle but we have already won the political battle ... everything is going our way."

The traditional right may, or may not, keep its members in line this time. But this issue - to fraternise or not with the NFwill remain the most important and destructive issue in French party politics into the next century. Much will depend on the rise of Mr Mégret. Although allegedly even more extreme in his private views than Mr Le Pen. he is regarded, and regards it sharply to the right.

Milosevic rules out chance of UN mediation in Kosovo

GOVERNMENT leaders in Belgrade firmly rejected any international mediation to solve the crisis in Kosovo vesterday, saying they were ready to open dialogue with leaders of the province's Albanian majority population at any time but that Kosovo's status was strictly a Serbian internal matter.

With time running out for President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia to meet international demands for a settlement to the Kosovo issue, he appeared to have adopted a strategy of temporary detente towards the Albanians combined with a vigorous refusal to let the outside world dictate terms for him.

. A demonstration staged by more than 50,000 students and other young Albanians in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, passed off without so much as a genuine dialogue. glimpse of a Scrb policeman the second time this week that the Serbs have held back from their usual practice of breaking up demonstrations with overwhelming force.

government negotiating team, ter, Ratko Markovic, waited in military police were still



new UN pressure

Pristing for a second day on the off-chance that Albanian leaders would accept their invitation to talk to them. The Albanians, backed by the US state departdenounced Mr ment. Markovic's delegation as a piece of propaganda aimed at scoring points, not opening a

"It looked like a veritable carnival - it was not an invitation for talks, but an attempt to undermine them," said Fehmi Agani, deputy leader of the LDK, the main Albanian par-At the same time, a Serbian ty in Kosovo. The Albanians said it was impossible to conled by the deputy prime minis-sider negotiations while para-

clustered thickly around a num- economic sanctions. Accordber of villages in the Drenica region - site of two ouslaughts by Serbian forces in the last two weeks in which more than 80 Albanians perished.

The six-nation Contact Group, which met in London on Monday, issued a number of conditions for President Milosevic to fulfil on pain of further international sanctions, including acceptance of a European fact-finding mission and initiation of a "meaningful dialogue" without preconditions.

Yesterday, however, as the Council of Europe's parliamentary council leader Leni Fischer visited Belgrade for talks with Mr Milosevic, the Serbs said they would not accept the mission. They also laid down specific conditions for talks namely, that any solution for bania. Kosovo would have to be found within Serbia's borders.

Like Belgrade, western governments have rejected the notion of independence for Kosovo, but they have not ruled out converting it into a full republic in Yugoslavia alongside Serbia and Montenegro.

The Contact Group will meet again on March 25 to de- lution were to be found. For the cide whether Mr Milosevic's attitude merits the imposition of look slim.

ing to diplomatic sources. NATO and the major powers are seriously considering the creation of a military cordon sanitaire around Yugoslavia including NATO troops in northern Albania, the expansion of the UN military mission in Macedonia, a troop presence in Bulgaria and a naval monitoring mission off the coast of Montenegro.

Kosovo's Albanian leadership to renounce its dreams of independence. Western governments fear an independent Kosovo would only exacerbate tensions with Belgrade, and might tempt parts of Macedonia and even Montenegro to secede from their respective states and join a nascent Greater Al-

Pressure is also mounting on

The LDK will have great difficulty in dropping its independence demand, however, as that is the plank on which its support is built.

One European foreign afwhich will top radios many times its fairs minister, Piero Fassino of Italy, said yesterday that both sides would have to relax their intransigent attitudes if any somoment, the chances of that

Serbia told proposals 'not good enough'

the latest offer of President Slohodan Milosevic to the insurin Kosovo, making clear it would not be enough to reverse the sanctions imposed in London against Yugoslavia by leading international powers, writes Repert Corowell.

Mr Miloscvic's proposals were "not good enough", Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary said, indicating that Europe entirely sympathised with the Albanrefused to meet a delegation the crisis by Mr Milosevic, and

The European Union yesterday from Belgrade this week, disgave the coolest of welcomes to missing the exercise as little more than a publicity stunt.

Last night EU foreign mingent ethnic Albanian minority isters at their informal meeting were exploring possible solutions, involving some kind of special status for the province, but within the borders of the existing rump Yugoslavia. As a German official put it, "there must be more autonomy, but we can't have outright separation."

Europe is adamant the isolation of Belgrade will continuc failing a genuine move ian majority in the province who towards a political solution to

and bite quickly

According to the Foreign Secretary, the regime had been "stunned" by the speed of Western reaction, and was especially alarmed by the suspension of financial support for Yugoslavia's privatisation pro-(privatisation) bonds, they cannot finance their deficit."

blunt warning to President crises.

Mr Cook was confident that the Suharto that acceptance of the tighter economic squeeze im- International Monetary Fund's posed by the six-nation Contact stabilisation plan offered the es-Group on Monday will bite - cape from Indonesia's financial turmoil With its refusal to comply

with the initial IMF recommendations, the country was "entering uncharted waters," Derek Fatchett, Minister of State at the Foreign Office said, underlining the risk that gramme. "If they can't sell their failure to deal with Indonesia risked undoing all the good work done by Thailand. Meanwhile, the foreign min- Malaysia and South Korea in isters delivered an unexpectedly tackling their own financial

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Suharto finds the old magic losing its power

NOGOROJO (the name means "dragon king") was forged in the Mataram period, and has mendak stones on the handle and a hilt of cendana wood. Its zig-zag blade is 12 inches long; the scabbard goldcovered. Nogorojo is a kris. or sucred dagger, and was handed down to Haji Hadisukismo by his grandfather who, like him, was a Javanese mystic.

"I was born a peasant," says the old man, "but now I am the chief of this village. My children are headmen as well, and people come to me for advice from all over Java, Nogorojo has the power of life. All my life I have been helped and supported by Nogorojo." The dagger is gently restored to its scabbard and, no, says Haji Hadisukismo, there can be no photographs.

A few years ago, he had a visitor from Jakarta who came with a purpose: to buy Nogorojo, and take it to the capital. Haji Hadisukismo was not tempted, although the offer was remarkable - not only was the man offering millions of rupiah, he was acting on behalf of Presito has many kris and other adviser to his predecessor, rulers in his own impersonal

Indonesian leader hangs on grimly, writes Richard

in Yogyakarta

Lloyd Parry

how powerful Nogorojo is."

For all the modernity and bustle of its cities, Indonesia is a superstitious country in which ancient patterns of belief exist alongside modern religious practices. In Borneo, Dayak people combine traditional religion with the Catholic Mass. In Java, the most populated and politically dominant of the Indonesian islands, mystics like Haji Hadisukismo hear supernatural voices, heal and tell fortunes. Few Javanese take such practices more seriously, or are regarded with more awe, than and the complete absence of a President Suharto.

Mr Suharto is also known to consult dukun, or sorcerers. and the suppression of overt According to Haji Hadisukismo, who worked as a mystic tics of the ancient Javanese

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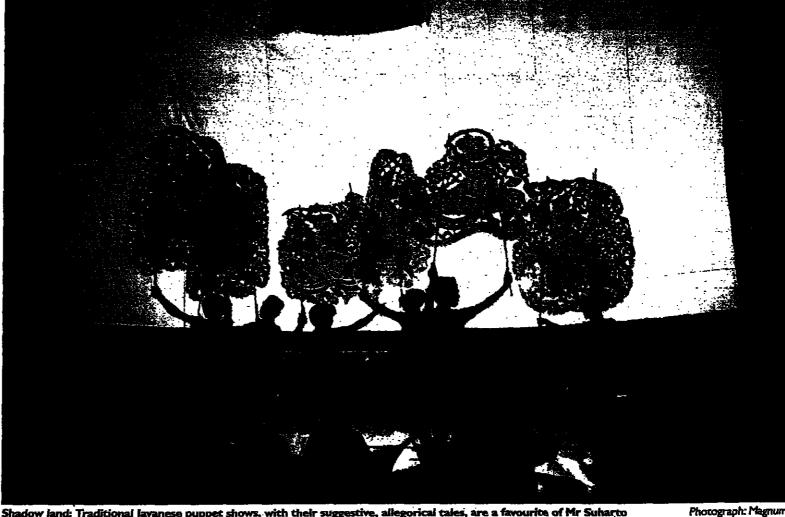
Sukarno, the President bathes in water brought from a lake on the sacred Mt Lawu. He is a devotee of the wayang kulit, or shadow puppet theatre, with its suggestive and allegorical tales.

A story circulating in Jakarta tells of a meeting of ministers held by Mr Suharto to discuss a knotty matter of state. Instead of talking, they were treated to a puppet performance of great beauty and mystery. At the end, Mr Suharto said: "I trust my wishes are clear," and left the room, leaving the anxious ministers racking their brains to work out the play's message.

And Mr Suharto's use of tra-

dition extends beyond magic.

Compared to other long-lasting dictatorships like that of Mao Tse-Tung or the late god-president Kim Il Sung of North Korea, Mr Suharto's has been remarkable for the unobtrusivenss of his personal style personality cult. But personal modesty, inconspicuousness emotion were the characteris-



Shadow land: Traditional Javanese puppet shows, with their suggestive, allegorical tales, are a favourite of Mr Suharto

surrounding Mr Suharto is as strong as that of shriller and more declamatory leaders. "He is very, very clever at using culture to portray himself as a traditional Javanese ruler, literally a king," says Mohtar Masud, a sociology professor at Gajah

and self-effacing way, the aura Mada University in Yogyakar- is his reluctance to step down. prepares for his succession and ta, the ancient Javanese capital According to some academics, where Mr Suharto was educatthe elevation of Javanese virtues such as restraint, refinement for the mystical quality, someed. The President's cultivation of junior aides, many from the and a distaste for direct criticism has helped Mr Suharto to mainmilitary, whom he strategically shuffles, demoting and banishtain power. "There is such value placed on hierarchy and on ing those who become too am-

hiding anger and emotions." says Daniel Sparringa of Airlingga. University in Surabaya. to the point when the webye will 'Ordinary people have lost the ability to protest." To a traditional king, power indivisible, and to compromise it by naming a successor is to risk losing everything. "I think it's quite simple: he's very

pass to someone else." To many that moment seems closer every day. One of the portents of imminent change is disasters and disruptions in nature - like the forest fires, drought, crop failures, food shortages, superstitious," says a Western and plane crashes which in-

admits that he is mortal, then

he will die." Wahyu is the name day is coming," says Prof Masud. "The natural disasters times described as a divine delegitimise him in people's light, which surrounds the Jaeyes." In 1962, Haji Hadisukismo was working for Sukarno. vanese leader. "Suharto's wahyu is still strong and it has to be Prompted by supernatural voices, he warned him that some ad-Suharto for now," says Haj Hadisukismo. "But we are close visers he was bringing into the palace meant him no good. In 1965, Indonesia's Year of Living Dangerousiy, Sukarno was deposed by Mr Suharto. "I told him: 'Father, you're the chauffeur of Indonesia, but if you're

few months. "Many Javanese

feel as if some kind of dooms-

merica retu

disking of hus and

computer.

not careful you'll hit a tree',' says the old man. "But he didn't listen and three years late everydiplomat. "He's afraid that if he donesia has suffered in the past thing fell apart."

Chinglish is victor in HK's battle of tongues

English as the medium of board, said: "It's not meant to instruction in Hong Kong schools was given new life yesterday when 14 schools successfully appealed against a from September, are not being government ruling that they "punished".

The government's attempts to introduce mother tongue. teaching have incited a great deal of passion in Hong Kong where, remarkably, four out of

must use Chinese to teach their

taught in English. Parents fear that children attending Chinese-medium schools will loose out in the job marketplace. Or as David To, the principal of the United Christian College said yesterday, after hearing his school had teaching in English, the students

At schools where the appeals vour by the incoming adminiswere successful, there were en- tration, it was in fact initiated thusiastic celebrations. However by the outgoing colonial regime. be an award." And he insisted that schools which were required to teach in Chinese, as

Yet this is the general pereption. Helen Yu, Hong Kong's Director of Education, is exasperated by this attitude. She argues that the current school system is turning out children who speak "Chinglish", in othfive secondary students are er words without a good grasp of either language. A visit to one of the Chinese English language schools quickly reinforces Mrs Yu's view. Not only the children, but many of the teachers, are

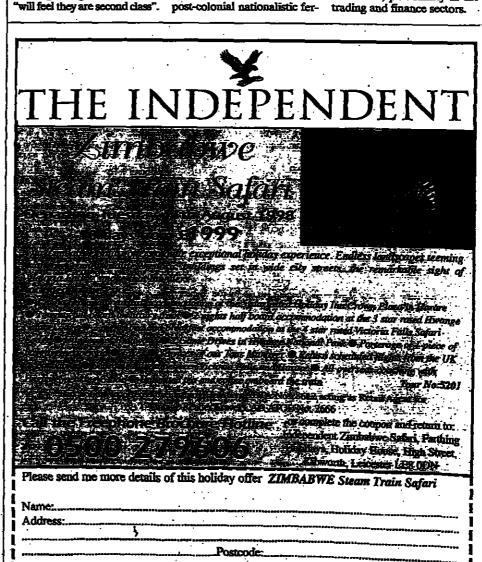
struggling to make themselves understood in English. Although the move to Chifailed in its appeal to continue nese medium instruction is post-colonial nationalistic fer-

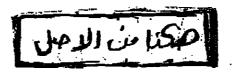
the side of those who advocate mother-tongue teaching. Not only does it tend to mean that children learn more in general but they also have a better chance of learning foreign languages, such as English, if they are systematically taught as foreign languages. However, Hong Kong parents do not seem to be greatly swayed by educational theory. Those with children in schools switching to Chinese are desperately trying to move them to English medium schools. There is talk of defiance and revolt against the new rules.

English remains an official language in Hong Kong, alongside Chinese. Since the handover it has become less prevalent in official circles, but remains the main language of sometimes seen as an act of commerce, particularly in the

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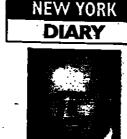


There's a Great Deal going on

Crazy daze for inmates of New York, the world's biggest asylum

To be in New York is to be an inmate in the world's biggest asylum. There is never any peace, day or night. Even here in The Independent's midtown office, 21 floors up and behind double-glazed windows, there is no escaping the racket. Right now, police sirens are wailing as if Armageddon has

The cacophory of New York is part of what gives it its enerry, of course. And energy is the whole point of this city. But sometimes, just sometimes, when your batteries are low and your nerves are ragged, it can



all get too much. One especially loud car horn is suddenly more

to the mountains, the Hamptons, even New Jersey, before migraine sets in.

Even if you pay attention only very slightly, it is hard not to conclude that a goodly portion of your fellow travellers on short of a dollar. Some are obviously loony, other merely eccentric, but it is all the raving that worries me most.

It is not just people cursing than your brain can bear. Get at telephones that won't take

about something they simply cannot help accosting complete strangers to tell them about it.

It happened to me one day last week as I was trying to buy a sandwich just across from the United Nations. The guy came in the door like a torpedo, screeched to a halt behind my left shoulder and proceeded to excoriate me for not rising up against basically everyone but especially against the police

me out of here, you want to their quarters or at taxi-cabs cut- department and the corrupt the three-handed play that is still scream. No wonder friends are ting them down as they try to crooks running the UN. Lordy, turning their attention to se- cross the street. So many peo- as if ordering the insides of a curing a rental out of town. Flee ple in New York seem so con- New York sandwich wasn't alsumed with anger or frustration ready brain-taxing enough without this in my ear. I ignored him first, then I wanted to smash his head in with the gherkin bottle behind the counter. Finally, he left and I just felt depressed.

> iddie Izzard, whom I school, thought I might be the one about to get hit when I asked his advice at a party thrown recently at Sotheby's for the Broadway première of Art,

Tasmina Reza, who packing them in in the West L talking that night to End. Across the room stood Newsweek. The magazine quotnone other than Sean Connery, attending as co-producer and holder of the film rights. Eddie knows Connery from the set of the upcoming. Avergers film. Did I dare go up and ask him to comment on the brownsha surrounding his knighthood - or rather his non-knight-▼ vaguely know from hood? Eddie's reply suggested that if I did, I might get biffed. I tried anyway, assuming Eddie

gruff but entirely polite. And,

ed her saying she was fed up with her own country, France, because no producers in Paris showed interest in the play or three others she has written and has turned on her for staging the last two in commercial theatres instead of state-subsidised houses.

wrote Art, is regretting

"The French mentality is to keep it small," she was cited as saying. "If you have ambition, was joking, and Connery was you are considered egocentric.

Unfortunately, the comments were reported from here by the French newspaper Le Monde. Reza went ballistic, claiming she had been misquoted, and demanded that an apology be printed. Why she thought Le Monde was at fault is not clear.

t seems there is an explanation for the explosion of police sirens twenty-one floors below my office window. The local branch of the Chase Manhattan bank is, as I write, in the midst of a hold-up, gunshots and all. Ah, New York.

America returns to the corner shop

The US love affair with the mall may be over, writes Mary Dejevsky, in Washington

DRIVE north west out of central Washington and you soon enter a noman's land of glass and marble walls, the first wave of suburban malls that line the freeway exits from the US capital. In a few months, though, some of those walls will start crashing down, felled in the name of bringhuman scale to the great

American shopping experience. The doomed walls belong to the Mazza Gallerie, a vast cuboid building. Inside, though you would hardknow to look at from the road, are to department stores - the upmarket Neiman Marcus and the downmarket Filene's Basement - a selection of speciality shops and plenty of empty premises.

The walls make Mazza Gaflerie a fortress: secure and air conditioned, but hardly somewhere to pop into for a loaf of bread or a bag of jelly beans.

rictor in

f tongues

Now, it has been bought by a much-praised Chicago developer, Dan McCaffery, and is to be made over, starting with the removal of its nost distinctive feature: the dauntg outside walls. According to Mr McCaffery, the main aim is to make and accessible.

In effect, the enclosed shopping centre is to be turned inside out and made to face the streets. The individual shops will be made to appeal to passers-by and local residents, not just to car-borne shoppers with sevshops should, in Mr McCaffery's words, be "people-friendly" and foster a sense of community.

If Mazza Gallerie, built in the Seventies, were the only enclosed shopping centre being subjected to this



American Pie: Wallace Heggestad, the last grocer in the town of Wilson, Minnesota, who shut up shop 14 years ago

though, it is just one of a dozen or tre. eral hours at their disposal. The more indoor complexes that have dubbed the "de-malling" of America. Nor is it limited to relatively pros-

be put down to the ambitious of one ed. A similar project has just been ished. Similar operations have aldeveloper and the eternal American started across the city, in the dequest for something new. In fact, pressed area south west of the cen-

Here, the Waterside Mall, a gibeen, or are about to be, shorn of ant shopping and office complex built their walls in a process that is being 30 years ago, obliterating the existing grid layout of the streets and chopping the district in two, is itself perous suburban districts, like to be chopped up into more man-

ready been completed in two other suburbs of Washington, outside Chicago, and in California and Flori-

Taking their cue from the suc-Friendship Heights in Washington, ageable pieces. The street grid is to of city living, developers are sensing they face outwards, beckoning their idea whose time is passing.

on the pavement. shopping centres is for a return to

open complexes, where shops front on to the main road and circle around a giant car park. There are signs, too, still small and hesitant, that cessful revivals of Manhattan and stores may be starting to move back rates have been accompanied by a left 30 years ago. And when they do surge of investment and the revival move back, as in central Chicago,

Photograph: Topham Picturepoint

late Nineties makeover, that could where the Mazza Gallerie is locat- be restored, and the walls demol- a change in customers' taste and pri- customers, allowing them to linger

Transforming fortress malls into people-friendly shopping streets and squares is not an easy task. But it is evidence, along with the nostalgic resort to words like "liveable" and "community", that the strict sepacentral Chicago, where lower crime into some of the towns and cities they ration of housing and commerce which leaves so much of American suburbia without a heart may be an

Washington cries foul over JFK mementoes

By David Usborne

An auction of John F Kennedy mem orabilia in New York next week is certain to arouse keen interest - after all, the Kennedys are the nearest thing America has to a royal family. But as the 600-odd lots were unveiled yesterday, a hitch had arisen. Should some of them be on sale at all?

Among the hordes milling through Guernscy's, a small New York auction house, were men and women in suits from Washington. Their mission: to retrieve a number of items that officials believe belong to the nation.

The catalogue includes JFK's presidential yacht, Honey Fitz, which alone could fetch several million dollars, as well as his sailing boat Flash II. It also features a large number of items gathered by his White House secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, after his assassination. She died in 1995 and bequeathed her collection to a friend, Robert White, who hopes to build a museum from the sale's proceeds to house those mementoes he is not putting into the sale.

But Ms Lincoln may not have been entitled to all of what she laid her hands on. Yesterday, the National Archives started negotiating to have some lots withdrawn, including Kennedy's inauguration speech, a drop-leaf signing table, notes and correport to the nation about the 1961 Berlin crisis and the portable record player that the President took almost everywhere on his travels.

Members of the Kennedy family have also approached Guernsey's with worries about ownership. John F Kennedy Jr is believed to want some items given back to the family. Guernsey's head, Arlen Ettinger, appears unimpressed. "The Kennedy's have money. They can come and bid on anything they want," she remarked.

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Cancer in retreat: cases drop and fewer lives are lost in US

By David Usborne in New York

IN A FIRST unmistakable sign that both new therapies and changes in lifestyle are having a beneficial impact, the numbers of cases of cancer have begun to retreat in the United States, as have the numbers of deaths from the disease.

progress is being made," Dr James Marks of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said, unveiling the most recent report on cancer in the US. "The burden of public fear should begin to lift."

It is the first time that cancer. which still kills 1,500 Americans each day, has been in retreat na-

"Cancer is conquerable and tionwide since records of the disease were first compiled in the Thirties. Overall, the report shows, the incidence of cancer cases fell by 0.7 per cent per year between 1990 and 1995. Deaths from cancer over the period fell by an average of 0.5 per cent.

The picture, nonetheless, is uneven, both as between different kinds of cancer and as between dif-

advantaged people and for African-Americans, particularly men.

Experts pointed to increased education about the hazards of tobac- in colon and rectum cancer, where per cent drop in lung-cancer cases. cent. Mouth and throat cancer was More generally, credit is given to much down by 1.8 per cent annually and increased screening, for instance for leukaemias showed a 1.0 per cent

The statistics are less hopeful for dis-forms of treatment. Breast-cancer melanomas, or skin cancer, rose rates have apparently levelled out after climbing rapidly for two decades.

The sharpest drop was reported

during by an average of 2.5 per cent:

The data is bleakest, however, for black men, who have the highest cancer incidence rate of any group in the co in explaining an average annual 1.1 cases dropped an average of 2.3 per country and for whom rates are still climbing. This is caused particularly by growing numbers of cases of prostrate cancer. "Some segments [of.

ferent segments of the population. breast tumours in women, and new drop. By contrast, the incidence of the population] have not benefited equally," observed John Seffrin, of the American Cancer Society.

According to the society, one in four deaths in the US are caused by cancer. More than half a million Americans are expected to die from some form of cancer this year. One in two American men can expect to develop cancer in their lifetime.

Hindu nationalist chief left in limbo as electoral alliance falls to pieces

By Peter Popham in Ludstow

AB Vajpayee, parliamentary leader of the Hindu nationalist BJP, should by now be packing his bags ready for removal to 7 Race Course Road, the prime minister's official residence. Instead he is twisting in the wind.

He has two big problems. The first and most urgent is that a crucial ally in the south, the former film star Jayalalitha, who faces serious corruption charges after her term as chief minister of Tamil Nadu, refuses to back him. It was said that she wanted her proxies to be the ministers of finance and law; alternatively, that she wanted the dismissal of her deadly rival who now runs the southern state. Whatever it was, Mr Vajpayee refused to grant it, and Jayalalitha pulled her 27 MPs. He was left well short of a majority.

Last night the head of state, President KR Narayanan, met leaders of the other main groupings, Congress, the United Front (UF) and the two main communist parties, to see if they had any bright ideas. But as both Congress and the UF are effectively leaderless, and as it was their latest quarrel which brought on the recent, unwelcome election, no one was optimistic.

Mr Vajpayee's immediate problem stems from the treachery of a dubious ally. But his other problem is more fundamental: he ffas proved unable, after nearly 50 years of trying, to amass the sort of broad national support that the Congress Party used to be able to take for granted. The disputed religious site in Ayodhya, symbol of India and the world's doubts tinues to haunt him.

The BJP overflows with patriotic emotion: it stands for India strong, self-confident and with nuclear missiles targeting Peking. But in its heart of hearts India doesn't buy it. Ayodhya explains why not.

It is a small town in the fertile plains of Uttar Pradesh, east of Lucknow in the north of the country. To call it dilapidated one of the frontline towns in Bosnia or Croatia in the heat of the recent wars there. It is a



about Mr Vajpayee's party, con- Explosive event: Hindu fundamentalists attacking the léth-century Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya in December 1992. Their actions destroyed the building Photograph: Popperfoto/AFP

which the people inhabit with- they destroyed the mosque. out complaint, knowing nothing

But one of the ruins is special. It was demolished so thoroughly that not one stone remains on top of another. This was the mosque of Babri

On 6 December 1992, a would be a kindness: it looks like crowd of Hindu zealots, including the president of the BJP, LK Advani, Mr Vajpayee's right-hand man, and several of town of ruins, crumbling car- the party's MPs, gathered here

casses of long-ago invasions and while police looked on and has been erased. For the place of Rama, "lord of the uni- been found, but then so is the national humiliation was gone

It was an explosive event, unleashing a volcano of Hindu versus Muslim communal anger in which perhaps 2,500 people died across the country. Mr Advani and several other top lead- worst miscalculation". ers were arrested, and the RSS, the paramilitary force that stands behind the BJP, was banned. But for the moment at least. Mr Vaipavee was unrepentant. Weeks after the demolition he declared that the is that the spot on which the

movement's finest hour. But for Mr Vajpayee and the others in the party who crave national power it was, as Mr Vajpayee later admitted, "the party's

It is hard to grasp why the destruction of a seedy old building, unused for religious purposes since 1949, should dog the Indian imagination in the way it does. The ostensible reason mosque was "a symbol of shame mosque stood was the birth-

Hindu zealots, it was their verse" in the Hindu pantheon birth of Rama. When the abject - replaced by a makeshift temand appropriated by nationalists as their divine mascot. Like thousands of Hindu temples across the north, it was destroyed by fanatical Muslims years ago, they hit on Ayodhya during the numerous invasions that wracked the country - supposedly in 1528, on the orders and rebuilding the temple have of Babur, founder of the Mughal empire - and replaced

with a mosque. The temple's erasure and replacement are conjectural as But the destruction in 1992 any comparably effective way to no archeological evidence has

and humiliated Hindus began chafing at the British yoke and and the long-vanished temple there. Demolishing the mosque been the most important projects nursed by nationalists since.

Ayodhya has always been a potent rallying cry for the BJP. was a watershed. The symbol of set the electorate on fire.

ple in a tent, a messy ongoing wrangle in the courts, and a dire casting around for a symbol of warning of the apocalypse national pride to unify them 150 awaiting any government that ventures down the communal-

> The bloodshed that followed the mosque's demolition drove home the danger of igniting such raw emotion in a union as fragile as India's. But Mr Vajpayee has been unable to find

muscles in order to stave off

growing civil unrest over the se-

vere food shortage. Earlier this

week, the Korean Buddhist

Sharing Movement from South

Korea claimed that its survey of.

refugees on the North Korean-

Chinese border suggested that

up to 3 million people had died

in North Korea over the past two

years because of the lack of food.

Diplomats cautioned that the

survey was not scientific and in

their opinion over-estimated

Norway nets Russian spies

A Norwegian official said he helped trap five Russian spies by feeding Moscow fake secrets in a career as a double agent that echoed the Cold War, "It's the roughest job you can do." Svein Lamark. 47, an official at the Ministry of Local Government, said a day after Norway said it was barring five Russian diplomats from the country for spying. "They wanted to know a great deal ... all types of secret documents on defence ... and of course as much as possible about the prime minister's office." he Reuters, Oslo

Ray in coma

James Earl Ray, assassin of Martin Luther King Jr. has slipped into a coma. Jerry Ray said that his brother fell into a coma on Wednesday at Nashville Memorial Hospital, where he was admitted with complications from liver dis-AP, Nashville

Soft landing

As a gesture to an old ally facing hard economic times, the Clinton administration has agreed to release the Thai government from a contract agreement to buy U.S.-made jet fighters it no longer can afford, administration officials said. President Bill Clinton was expected to discuss the arrangement in a White House meeting with Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leek-AP, Washington

Death fall

A British real estate manager has jumped to his death from the top floor of a highrise building, the Bahrain Tribune reported. Nigel Hoare, a senior manager of the Bahraini property firm Cluttons, jumped from the 18th floor of the Diplomat Tower here a day after he filed a false report of his car being stolen, the newspaper AP, Manamo

Vanunu move

Supporters of nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanuou said they would push for his early release from jail after Israel allowed him out of 12 years of solitary confinement. The Justice Ministry said Vanunu, 43, was able for the first time on Thursday to mix with other prisoners at the jail in Ashkelon where he is serving an 18-year sentence for es-

pionage. Reuters, Jerusalem United rights

The UN announced is launching a joint poster advertising campaign with Italian clothing firm Benetton to celebrate this year's 50th anniversary of the Universal Deciaration of Human Rights.

Write stuff

Terry Anderson, a former chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press who spent six years as a hostage in Lebanon, will join the faculty of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. Anderson, an associate professor at Columbia University's Gradnate School of Journalism since 1996, accepted a oneyear contract to teach at Ohio as a Scripps Howard visiting professional.

Mebrow home

Jiri Dienstbier, former dissident and first post-communist foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, will take over as UN human rights investigator for former Yugoslavia, officials said. Dienstbier succeeds former Finnish Defense Minister Elisabeth Rehn

Lifeline for children as funds flood in

By Amanda Kelly

THE INDEPENDENT's Iraq appeal has reached a total of

The figure has surpassed the expectations of everyone involved and will allow us to supply the Iraqi children with even more life-saving supplies crance as a result of chronic than first envisaged. Professor Soad Tabaqchali,

medical director of Medical Aid for Iraqi Children (MAIC), estimates our funds will allow us to treat well over 2,000 children. The bulk of the money will

be spent on anti-cancer medicines but we will also be providing the children with urgent nutritional supplements. ternational UK, which is already helping to feed 10,000

children in Iraqi hospitals, said: "The absence of basic medicines is having tragic humanitarian consequences. But the lack of basic nutrition is an equally desperate problem which affects thousands of dependent sources. Both charpeople.

There are especially acute shortages of vital supplements for infants such as lactose-free infant formula. This life-saving have developed lactose-intol-



malnutrition, gastro-enteritis Professor Tabaqchali, who has extensive contacts in Iraqi hospitals, is helping us put to-

gether a delivery of the medicines and supplies most urgently required. Since MAIC was established in 1994, she has organised the sending of medicines, milk and medical equip-

Howard Bell of CARE In- ment including incubators worth approximately £323,400 to paediatric hospitals all over The receipt and use of the medicines we send will be verified by staff at CARE (0171

379 5247) and MAIC (0171 724 3379) as well as other inities are happy to answer questions and accept donations after our appeal ends.

Please send cheques, made out to The Independent Iraq product treats children who Appeal, to PO Box No 6870. London E14 5BT

North Korea goes on war footing By Teresa Poole

in Pekang

NORTH Korea was yesterday put on "wartime mobilisation", apparently to coincide with seasonal military exercises.

The restrictions, which cleared the streets of Pvongyang of people, have also come into force just as Korean peace negotiations are due to restart in Geneva, and as the country is approaching the mid-March period when the official state media said grain supplies would run out. North Korea last week said daily rations had been cut from 300 grams in January to 100 grams in March.

North Korea-watchers in Peking said they believed the war-footing was connected with military exercises which usually take place in the spring. Foreign diplomats in Pyongyang were told of the

nicipal supplier said further cuts were

About 100 protestors marched down

wartime mobilisation yesterday morning when they were issued with a government statement. Under the instructions, only North Koreans will be allowed into the country and foreign residents will be restricted to Pyongyang except when given specific permission for trips "related to the food assistance",

prolonged power cuts in the centre of clear vision for its (Mercury's) future."

the main thoroughfare, calling for the power cables to the central business dis-

New Zealand's biggest city as the mu-said march organiser Hilary Ord.

feebled by age and conture, Shin

In-young hobbled out of a South

Korean prison after 31 years of

mostly solitary confinement and

behind. "There are many more

inside," said Mr Shin, 69. "I feel

litical prisoners released yes-

Mr Shin was one of 74 po-

sorry when I think of them."

STRICKEN with cancer and en- terday in a sweeping amnesty by million people affected by the President Kim Dae jung that brought the nation's new leader. himself once a prisoner of conscience, only scom from human rights groups that once were lamented the face of those left among his chief supporters.

Prisoner releases bring only scorn on Seoul leader

"We are very disappointed," the nation's largest civil rights group, Minkahyup, said, noting that the vast majority of the 5.5

a ruling which could well impede the work of international aid agencies in the country. means that the wartime system

The statement added: "This

and order applies not only to the regular armed forces, but also to the national economy and overall social life." Foreign residents in Pyongyang reported

AUCKLAND (Reuters) - Auckland board. "I want to see people with skills two restored cables and an energy contask in juggling the still limited available

normal conditions downtown.

But Mercury has said it cannot guar-

antee continuous supply until a tempo-

rany overhead power link is installed into

the city, which could take another four

weeks. Mercury spokesman Matthew

that the city was deserted ves-The perpetual uncertainty

amnesty were traffic offenders

eral of the South Korean chap-

ter of Amnesty International,

. said:"The government released

only part of the long-term pris-

oners of conscience because

they feared a backdash from the

country's conservative groups."

Oh Wan-ho, secretary-zen-

and petty criminals.

about what is going on inside North Korea made it difficult for diplomats to judge whether anything more than normal civilian drills were going on. There was speculation that the clampdown might be the military flexing its negotiations.

the tragedy.

Pyongyang's posturing at the moment is also probably tied to the resumption of the fourparty talks that are attempting to put in place a permanent peace agreement on the Korean peninsula. Today in Geneva, preliminary talks will convene between the two Koreas, United States and China, ahead of Monday's resumption of formal

supplies to meet demand. "The question

for next week is how many people will

weather stays at this heat, we are like-

ly to need even greater savings." he said.

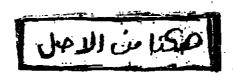
people back and we can't increase the

savings then we are likely to have cuts."

"The reality is that if we get more

UN post Marchers call for resignations over power cuts

come back. If more come back and the



residents today marched in protest at the in strategic management, people with a servation campaign have restored near

Protesters called for full compensa-

tion for lost business and wages since the

unprecedented failure of all four main

resignation of the Mercury Energy trict on 20 February. Extra generators, Bolland said the company faced a tricky

cities Welcome to Moneyworld

Publicity is off the Cash registers are ringing at Britain's menu theme parks,

thrilling developers and children alike.

Tim Hulse reports

"A SIGN above the gate said Welcome to Bullfrog's World! Even I was excited, and my kids were buzzing. The great metal gates swung open and in we swarmed, carried along by the enthusiasm of the crowd. And what a sight met our eyes! The place was fantastic!"

It sounds good, doesn't it? And if Bullfrog's World really existed, then no doubt the crowds would be flocking there this weekend as the nation's theme parks begin to reopen after the winter break. But the words of the satisfied customer above come from the introduction to a computer game called Theme Park, the aim of which is to construct your own imaginary park. All you need are the skills "to make people happy while simultaneously taking them for as much money as possible ... because when you play Theme Park, you're riding a financial whirlwind."

And how. Business is booming in Britain's theme parks and more and more developers all over the country are looking to play the game for real. Barely a month goes by without news of some fresh project. At the beginning of March, plans were unveiled for a £500m complex it Magor, near Newport in

Monmouthshire, incorporating rides, restaurants and hotels on 750 acres of land around Pencoed Castle. In February, developers of the proposed 1.000ft Festival Gardens Tower in Liverpool announced that the first 30 of its 90 floors would form a "vertical theme park" based on a jungle theme, with a 30-floor waterfall. On London's South Bank, a £17m "wine theme park" called Vinopolis is expected to open next summer. And, of course, in Greenwich construction is under way on the best-known theme park of them all, the Millennium Dome.

10 N

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e de la companya de l

As competition mounts, the established theme parks are responding to the challenge. Typical is Alton Towers, the country's most successful, with around 2.75 million visitors a year. Today it opens its latest ride to the public, a whiteknuckle experience called Oblivion, which features a facefirst vertical drop at 110km/h with G-forces pushing 4.5. It cost about £12m to build and a range of merchandise includes an Oblivion condom "for those wishing to experience

a second ride of a lifetime". Meanwhile, at Legoland on Thursday, members of the press and a select group of children were granted a preview of its latest attraction, Castle-Land, which also goes public today. At a cost of £4m, the two-storey castle features a molier-coaster called The Drag-



Towering profits: Legoland, which is targeted at younger children, pulled in 1.4 million visitors in its first year

on Ride. It's pretty tame stuff compared to Oblivion, but will no doubt prove to be thrilling enough for the park's target audience of under-12s. The minister for tourism, Tom Clarke, was also in attendance. He had a ride on the Dragon and could be seen to duck at the point where the track dips steeply down into a tunnel. "I thought I was going to be decapitated,"

he said afterwards. Opened two years ago, Legoland pulled in 1.4 million visitors in its first year and has risen to third place in the theme park rankings behind Alton Towers and Chessington World of Adventures. It was built on the model of the Danish original for £85m and, un-

actually has a theme. Lego bricks are an integral part of most of its attractions. And it goes without saying that Lego is the major theme of the large shop at the exit.

Since last May Mr Clarke has been taking a few days out of every month to visit Britain's leading tourist attractions (nice work if you can get it) and this was the final engagement of his tour. The minister says he's impressed by the amount of research that theme parks put into their attractions. "I think they give a lot of thought to how children react," he said. "It's all very clever and yet very simple. Kids like things that move and things that are exciting. Even

like most of its competitors, it today, on a very cold day, you can look around and see that everyone's very happy."

It's children who are the driving force behind the theme park boom. According to John Wilkes, general secretary of the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions, although parents may want to take their kids to zoos and museums, there's only one place the kids really want to go. "After the age of nine or 10, the children will take the parents where they want to go," says Mr Wilkes. "The figures show a marked movement from zoos to amusement parks at around that age."

But theme parks still have their detractors. Conservation can be an issue at new sites and

local residents are often none too happy at the thought of thousands of cars descending on their country havens. This latter problem is usually countered by developers with an ar-

gument about job creation. Theme parks really are part of the New Britain: service economy jobs, money-spinning leisure, entertainment for a TV generation, something that appeals to every class - well, the children, at least.

The appeal goes right to the top. The royal seal of approval was granted to the theme park experience as far back as 1992, when Diana and her sons were snapped splashing through Thorpe Park's Loggers Leap. But snobbery remains. In

shell-suited hordes stuffing hot dogs down their mouths. This was perhaps the nightmare vision that prompted Sir Ronald Arculus, chairman of the Kensington Court Residents' Association, to write a stiff letter to The Times regarding plans for a £10m Princess of Wales garden of remembrance at Kensington Palace. "Many people would like to see a small. dignified memorial suited to the historical setting, if it could be sited to enhance and not destroy the amenities of the gardens, which are enjoyed quietly every day by local residents and visitors," he wrote. "Not a theme park, please."

some minds the phrase "theme

park" conjures up a vision of

When the pain of loss grows up with you

EVERY year some 18,000 children under the age of 16 lose a parent, while many others experience the death of a sibling, friend, grandparent or family member. It may happen when you are very young, but the loss lasts a lifetime. The princes William and Harry were the most high-profile youngsters to be included in this statistic last year.

But while helplines abound for the bereaved, there has been no specialist line for children, until today. Cruse, the organisation for the bereaved, has set up such a line for anyone who suffered bereavement in childhood. They expect callers of all ages, including elderly people who have never come to terms with deaths in childhood. Unresolved grief can last much, much longer than we think.

The pattern of loss in early life can be quite distinctive. Children often continue grieving for a lost mother or brother throughout their childhood and into middle age, continually experiencing a new form of loss. The bereavement grows up alongside them, as it were.

"When I'm with my own daughter, who's a teenager and can be rather cruel, I often say she's lucky to have a mother," says Janet Dean, 52, whose mother died when she was six. "It's only as I've got older that I can see how nice it would have been to have had someone there to talk with. Everyone tells me she was a lovely lady."

Since her mother was only in her thirties when she died giving birth to Janet's sister, Janet felt very peculiar when she reached an age older than her mother. She also worries about her son because he is 18, the age her brother died. Once he's 19 she'll feel happier.

Children bereaved of parents can lose their childhood as well. "I'd just started school and I became very inward-looking," says Janet Dean. "I used to stand in the playground with my head towards the wall and I felt very isolated."

Sometimes bereaved children get bullied and teased by other children at school, who are frightened by death, and taunt them. Sometimes they believe, at some unconscious level, that the parent died and left them because they were naughty. Then they feel incredibly guilty, and behave badly precisely to bring on the punishment they feel they deserve. And sometimes they become exceptionally good and a "little mother" to the rest of the family for the rest of their

"Things got even worse when my brother died when I was 12," says Janet Dean. "I'd just started secondary school and



Early grief: the princes William and Harry

I was very close to him. He was very good and nice, and he died of a brain tumour. That was much, much worse than my mother. I can remember crying an awful lot on my own in bed because I couldn't bear to worry my father or anyone else in the family. My father had never got over my mother dying and this was more than he could bear. I'd taken on the role of the mother of the family, not practically but psychologically. I would do the worrying: I would never go to sleep until all my brothers and sisters were in."

If a sibling dies, the remaining children may feel guilty they didn't die instead, or they may become jealous, believing the grieving parent felt the dead child was more special.

Dwaine Steffes, a children's counsellor and training officer for Cruse, and author of When Someone Dies, a book for use in schools, says: "On the whole the attention is given to the spouse, not the child," he says. "The children can feel they are on the sidelines.

"I would certainly recommend they go to the funeral, as long as it's all explained to them in advance - that certain people may cry, that the coffin may be there, that the vicar will say some nice things - and then they are left to make up their own minds whether they want to go. It can be a healing experience because without seeing the coffin they often imagine the person is still alive, in some magical way."

Janet Dean wasn't allowed to go to the funeral of either her mother or her brother, and it affected her enormously. Indeed, until her father died and she went to his funeral she dreamt about her brother's return every night for nearly 20

"One problem with children is that they often find it difficult to know what death actually means, unless they live on a farm, in which case they have a better idea," says Dwaine Steffes. "They often get very confused feelings without knowing why and start becoming depressed and sad. It's very important that their form teacher knows and understands, and that the child is asked whether it wants the fact mentioned and how he or she would like the announcement made. And they must know that at any time at school they can have a private word with their teacher if they feel suddenly unhappy." Cruse Bereavement Care Youth Line: 0181-940 3131.

Virginia Ironside

Middlebrow home of the grooviest tunes around

It's all change at Radio 2. A clutch of star signings are threatening to make it hip. Vanessa Thorpe tunes in

A SUITABLY velvet revolution is under way at Radio 2. It seems the BBC's most laid-back music station, originally designed for middle-of-the-road smoothies who like their broadcast chat delivered at an easy canter, bas en infiltrated by a peculiarly

mellow brand of fifth columnist. Nell Tennant of The Pet Shop Boys and piano player extraordinaire Jools Holland are to become the Pete Murray, Ken Bruce and John Dunn of the late Nineties.

So is the station that brings you "Sing Something Simple" suddenly hip, or are the bad boys becoming old farts? Another member of the

groovy new team, comedian and TV film critic Stuart Maconie, feels that it is a question of Radio 2 being repositioned.

"It is because of the way that pop culture has become really fragmented. The people who really love music and spend a lot men such as Jimmy Young and of money on CDs, the people Terry Wogan, do still loom Roy Hudd is still there, Alan Lamarr, the slicked-back standof money on the station's sched- Whicker is still there for God's up comedian who hosts the



On the same wavelength: Pete Murray and Jools Holland

talk, have been pushed away from Radio L." he says. Many of the chocolatevoiced old retainers of Radio 2.

ules, but the new spring and summer line-up contains a sprinkling of subtle surprises. Johnnie Walker is still there, Alan Freeman is still there,

cently hyper-hip Neil Tennant. In an unprecedented approach to the sophisticated end of alternative club culture, Radio 2 has asked him to introduce the Noel Coward Concert, organised by the Red Hot Aids Charitable Trust to coincide with the centenary of Coward's birth.

Jools Holland, darling of all hardcore musos, is also waiting to leap out at you waving his rhythm stick. A man who knows exactly how take his Mojo apart and put it back together in working order, he is to present a new show on Mondays.

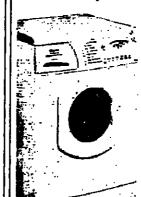
"Fifties throwback" Mark

sake, yet further down the list BBCTV game show Never Mind is the name of the until quite re- the Buzzcocks, may also at last have found his middle-brow niche. No longer sneered at and subjected to ridicule by his mates because of his tastes, he is to present a new rock n'roll series."It is about time we had more than Rock Around The Clock to represent the most exciting era in pop. I am honoured to have

been asked to present it." Maconie thinks that the slower pace of change at Radio 2 is more acceptable to listeners than the way in which its "adolescent" sister, Radio 1, had its schedules altered, "avoiding the sudden revolution under Matthew Bannister that left blood all over the floors," he

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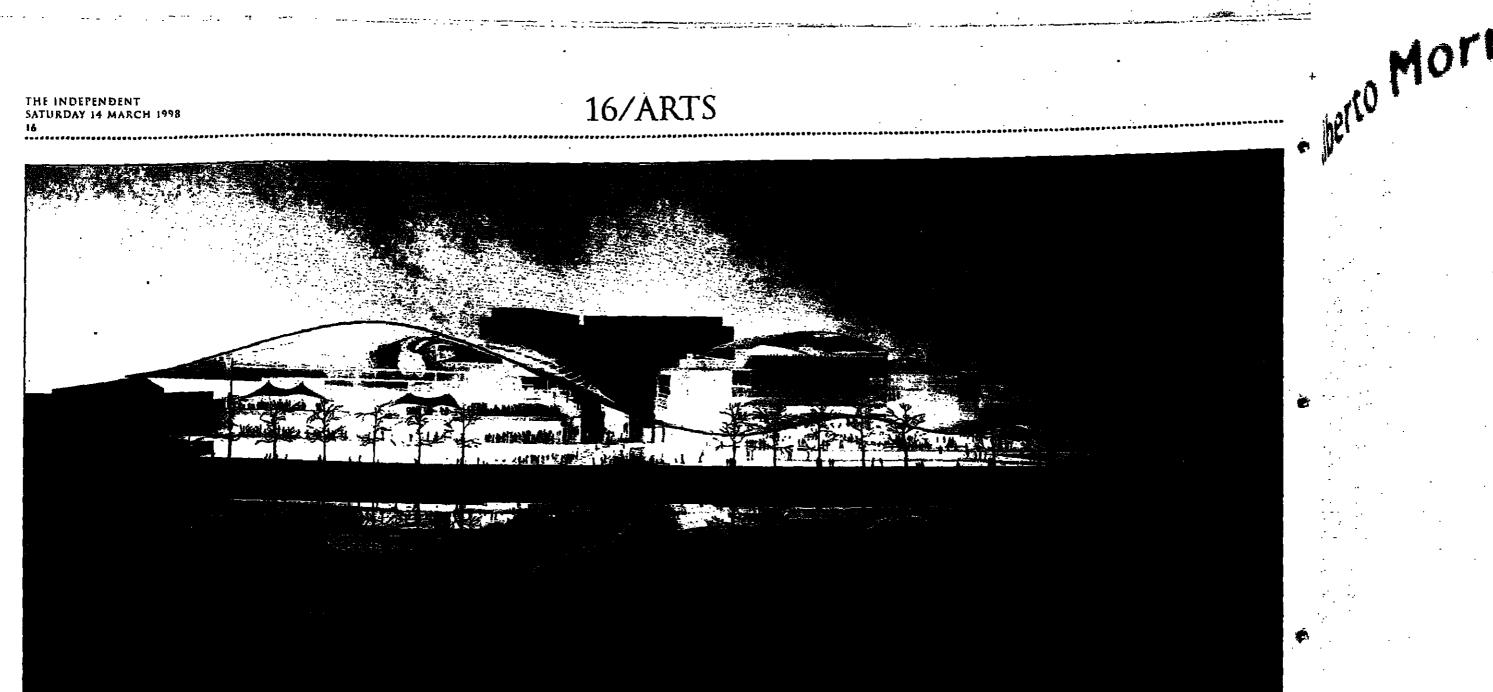
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The grand plan: The design for an undulating glass canopy to cover the South Bank Centre would have been a central feature of London's skyline

We're not on the crest of a wave

Lord Rogers' scheme for the South Bank promised a stunning landmark, says David Lister. Chris Smith must share the blame for the project's demise

THREE years ago this month I accompanied Nicholas Snowman, the chief executive of the South Bank Centre, to Paris. He wanted to emphasise coming cultural links between the French and British capitals.

As we returned he waxed lyrical about how Europeans would step off Eurostar at Waterloo and turn the corner to see renovation of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Hall and Hayward Gallery. Indeed, as we stepped off Eurostar there was a beaming Rogers to meet us, showing us how the development would also mean a new Hungerford Bridge linking the two banks of the Thames. In addition to the striking wavy roof - which would be a landmark feature for London - the alienating, dingy, windswept, concrete walkways would be destroyed; there would be a new street-level entrance for the Hayward; acoustics in the concert halls would be improved as would foyer, cafe and education spaces. And visitors would at last be able to find their way

around this appallingly signposted complex. So much for cultural links between London and Paris, so much for Lord Rogers's enthusiasm, three years of planning. £1m of lottery money which went into a feasibility study, a promised £17m contribution from publisher Paul Hamlyn, and the opportunity to give the world's largest arts complex a desperately needed new face.

Arts Council, after months of dithering, said it cannot afford the £75m of lottery money necessary. But it "approved it in prin-

been a brave Culture Secretary who tried of an arts centre could tolerate such a sitto persuade Parliament of the need for another tranche of lottery money to go to London after the furores over the Royal Opera House's £78m and, of course, the Millennium Dome's £400m.

And, lest the South Bank Centre should see this as a ringing message of support, it should be stressed that its administrators, too, have contributed to the mess. Dwindling audiences, programming that has drawn criticism, the frequent and embarrassing changes of mind over how many orchestras should be resident at the halls (and even over the names of the halls themselves). And their first lottery applications did not even meet the criteria. The centre does not always inspire confidence. Nicholas Snowman, describing the merits of the Rogers scheme to me recently, remarked how difficult it was to find the front door of the Hayward Gallery. An art lover

from Mars might think it odd that the head

uation for a decade.

At the Arts Council, staff will tell you in private that part of the reluctance to approve the scheme has been unease with the present administration. The South Bank chairman Sir Brian Corby stood down this week and I expect Mr Snowman to move on pretty soon. But be it personality conflicts, differences over music programming and administration policy between an arts organisation and its funding body, or political cowardice, an architectural scheme that would have been a notable addition

to the London skyline has been lost. The undulating canopy would have provided 260 per cent more space for arts and foyer activities. And it would have been a landmark to compare with the new Guggenheim in Bilbao or Rogers's own Pompidou Centre in Paris, or even the Louvre Pyramid - landmarks that draw you to a city. The masterplan was not perfect. Margaret Richardson of the Twentieth Century Society protested: "The Rogers wave roof: rises so high that it will swamp the Festival Hall. Glass is only transparent when lit internally. For most of the time this will

be perceived as a solid mass interrupting

important views along the river." And the architect Terry Farrell, who originally submitted a less expensive scheme with an overall roof, has said: "I hated and wished to undo the mega architecture which wrapped the Festival Hail and the whole site in octopus tentacles of the same concrete design." He was "concerned the Rogers scheme may be perceived as doing the same, enveloping the whole site in one kind of architecture".

But no radical new design is likely to receive universal approbation. Marcus Binney, a distinguished writer on architecture, describes the wave roof as "potentially the most beautiful London landmark of the millennium, taking the tradition of the 19th century iron and glass station roof, and transforming it into a futuristic saddle shape which will look dramatically different from every angle".

aria Ortese

:Mellor

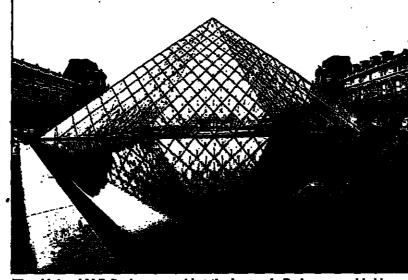
And complementing the Rogers plan would have been the changes to the Royal Festival Hall by the firm Allies and Morrison. In addition to acoustic improvements, the architects would have restored the original system of circulation and reopened the roof terraces. This (along with improvements to the Hayward) might yet survive the Smith banging of heads.

London will have a new Richard Rogers building - the £750m Dome. It, too, will be an interesting building, but inside it will be a theme page. Those who visit it are unlikely to go more than once. The glass roof South Bank would have been a cultural meeting point for London and beyond. way to mark the millennium?

Then there is the £78m of lottery money spent on the Royal Opera House. Would the Rogers scheme not have been a better use of lottery arts money? But the opera house got their bid in first and Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, was keen to see it go through quickly, correctly anticipating that there would be a backlash

against expensive London projects. Again, one must ask if that amounts to any sort of a strategy - either for the arts, for London, or for the country? Instead of rushing through one big scheme and allowing the next to gamble on the prevailing mood, government and Arts Council should have weighed up the merits of the projects they knew were soon to come before them, and done some prioritising.

But that would have demanded a national arts strategy and an overriding concern for the architecture of London. There is little sign of either. And though research shows that 95 per cent of people say the South Bank environment is "appalling and puts them off coming", expect no change.





The shining I M Per's glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris won worldwide acclaim, while the extraordinary new Guggenheim museum put Bilbao on the map

Laugh? They almost died of shame

cipie", whatever that means. It also passed

the problem to the Culture Secretary, Chris

Smith, who rapidly passed it back again.

Mr Smith is to meet all the leading play-

ers next week. His officials say he will "bang

heads together" to see if something can be

rescued from the grand plan. But Mr Smith

should not be too shy to put his own head

in the circle when the banging begins. For

he, too, has a share of the blame. The

scheme was politically too hot to handle.

Arts Council has only £200m to spend over

the next six years on big schemes. To spend

nearly half of this in one swoop on a Lon-

don venue would, the Council feared, have

brought the wrath of the regions and of small-

In theory, the Government could have

er arts organisations down on its head.

The restructuring of the lottery means the

Theatre: Surgeon of Honour Southwark Playhouse, London

THE OBSESSION with honour in Spanish Golden Age drama can, to an English sensibility, seem pretty preposterous. All

all that stiff-backed hypersensitivity to real (or imagined) insult. It's a shallow self-respect, we tend to feel, that is so morbidly dependent on the behaviour of oth-

This week the scheme was ditched. The found part of the money. But it would have

that banging on about reputation. Falstaff, with his easygoing cyn- for her alleged infidelity with a As the recent RSC staging of ers (the virtue, say, of a spouse).

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ical attitude to honour, would be lucky to have lasted five minutes in such a rigid shame-culture.

The Painter of Dishonour proved, however, the plays of Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681) have the power to overcome temperamental differences and make a deep impact here. Why? Partly because of the Baroque bravura with which he conveys the tightness of the no-win trap dictated by the honour code; partly because of the piercing intelligence with which he questions the inhumanity of that code, while blocking off easy escape routes.

Mounted now in a rather patchy but ultimately persuasive production by Judith Roberts at Southwark Playhouse, Calderon's The Surgeon of Honour (1635) heightens one's admiration for this dramatist. The tortured grisliness of the world it depicts can be summed up in the final tableau. The hideously jealous Count Gutierre (Nigel Parkin) drags in a sodden bed on which lies the corpse of his wife, whom he has caused to be bled to death by a desperately unwilling doctor

former lover. To save both his face and hers, he tries to pass

this off as a medical accident. But John Duvall's icy King decides to turn the tables on this double-standard avenger. Like some weird collision between Othello and Measure for Measure, the play boasts not only an honour obsessed wife-murderer, but a dark horse of a ruler (cf the Duke in Measure) and a one-track-minded woman (à la Shakespeare's Mariana) prepared to have the man who dumped her at any price.

The fixated female, Leonor (Patricia Boyer), is the tricksy means by which the King punishes the horrified Gutierre. A widower now, he is told to marry Leonor. The fact that his hands are literally covered in the blood of his innocent ex-wife isn't exactly a recommendation for his skills as a sensitive husband. But this seems to be an added attraction to Leonor, whose stickling for the honour code verges on pornographic masochism: "If I am sick, Count," she urges, "don't bes-itate to cure me..." and she isn't talking about medicine.

The staging has some laos-

Jealous: Nigel Parkin as Count Gutierre

es, but makes a strong case for an unsettling play. A refreshingly more flexible approach to honour is provided by a clownservant, Coquin (Christopher McInley), who is given the unenviable ultimatum of making the humourless King laugh or having all his teeth pulled out. A man who is set that task in this unsmiling world had better order some dentures quick. To 4 April. Booking: 0171-620

- Paul Taylor

THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

MPs have been getting very exercised about the prospect of their activities being confined to long wave as part of Radio 4's great schedule changes next month. There is a strong argument that one of the best services a public service broadcaster can perform is to open the actions of our legislators to plain view. Putting parliamentary coverage on long wave, even with extended hours, isn't furthering that aim.

At the same time, you can appreciate the crystalline logic behind the BBC's decision to lump parliament in with Test Match Special and the Morning Service: these are all minority activities apparently intended to give the listener, either through philosophy or sheer duliness, a new per-

spective on eternity. On These Days (last Saturday on Radio 4) offered a history of parliamentary scandals which made it clear that over the past century or so Parliament has offered colourlessness as a plausible substitute for transparency.

The production was partly to blame for this, with its shameless adoption of every aural cliché (a brief account of Parnell and Kitty O'Shea was accompanied, bafflingly, by a mawkish dose of Irish folk music) and the usually sparky Matthew Parris on subdued form.

was a lack of really impressive wrongdoing. Of course, it may be that Parliament has just been particularly good at covering up its own tracks; but listening to Yesterday in Parliament on Priday, you wondered whether the presence of the microphone only makes it more tempting for the public to ignore potential scandal.

After a solid five minutes of drab heckles directed at Geoffrey Robinson and his all-singing, all-dancing blind trust, what you feel is not righteous indignation but a weary sense that a quick burst of Morning Service might be just the thing to liven up proceedings. Roll on long wave

then we can rediscover enough respect for our legislators to worry about what they get up to.

Meanwhile, buried in the more than decent obscurity of Radio 3's Sunday evening schedules, a wholesale transfer of the Royal Court production of Conor McPherson's Still, the main problem play The Weir. A talkie jumble of inconsequential dialogue and lengthy anecdote, this is in many ways the worst possible play to do on radio. But while the actors did from time to time sink into a deadening staginess, the nuanced depth of their performances allowed an undertone of nagging horfor to pierce the atmosphere. And Ian Rickson managed to enhance the effect with a creative use of radio cliché - the howling wind effect which opened the play was just enough overdone to create a useful sense of chaos barely held off.

At a time when the BBC is becoming notably cowardly about broadcasting plays of any and bury the whole thing in length, The Weir provided a decent obscurity for a while; neat vindication of drama

صكنا من الاعل

Alberto Morrocco

ALBERTO MORROCCO was dominant influence and, as of his time in Scotland, Portraiture has been problematic for much of the 20th century. but he brought to it his practicality, the straightforwardness

warmth and directness. Portraiture is a social business. The greatest portrait painters have always been genial, open people, putting their sitters at ease, and Morrocco was born to it. One of his finest portraits is of the late Lord Cameron, done in 1974. It is a simple, forceful and direct painting, and it seems entirely appropriate that it was done in Raeburn's studio. Raeburn too was a genial, as a friend. charming man.

Portraiture was only part of Morrocco's output. He painted constantly and like Bonnard, who had a significant influence on his work in the 1950s, he painted best what was closest to him: Vera in the kitchen, or in the bedroom arranging her hair, children round the table, all painted with a delicate, Impressionist touch. For a while in the Sixties Picasso, Modernism. even abstraction had a place in his art. But his instinct was to as a painter, these qualities celebrate. Braque became a were reflected in his art.

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by far the finest portrait painter travel became easier and he discovered the land of his ancesmore vivid. of his training, and his own vivid

Most typical of his later work are similt scenes beside the sea, or luscious still-lifes bright with the jewelled red of water meions and the sharp yellow of lemons, the background bright and warm. These paintings are often touched with humour, and the composition is simplified to allow his delight in it all to shine through unencumbered, just as his delight in life itself shone speak Italian though he made through him to illuminate all those lucky enough to know him

Alberto Morrocco was a man of great charm: warm, friendly and open, flamboyant even, but only because of an overflow of energy. With an inquiring gaze and a fine Roman nose, his intelligence and humour were immediately striking. As fitted the Scottish son of Italian immigrants, he combined the best of Scottish directness with Italian warmth, courtesy and generosity of spirit. Throughout his long career

Morrocco, had come to Scottors, his subject matter became . land as a young man and kept more exotic and his colour an ice-cream shop. His name he was adventimous too and was actually Marrocco, but the signwriter spelt it Morrocco in letters a foot high on the café front and so it stuck. Alberto himself never thought of it till he had difficulty getting a passport because he did not spell his name as it was written on his birth certificate. His mother, Celesta Crolla, had

come to Scotland as a young

child and so she spoke Scots

and he never really learnt to

several attempts.

At the age of 14 he went Art in Aberdeen, by his own account and with typical modesty, not because he was a child prodigy, but because in those days if you wanted to go to college when you were 14 "nobody would stop you". At Gray's be came under the influence of James Cowie and Robert Sivell both dedicated to an almost based on drawing. They taught by example and his early work shows how deeply Cowie

His father, Domenicantonio Aberdeen University Students' Union. He always remained a superb draughtsman. But discovered Picasso for himself; he was even sent out of the classroom for dating to try

him enlisted in the 51st High-

Cubism.

land Division, but posted to Edinburgh Castle along with an assorted group who were all, like him, in his own phrase, of "doubtful origin". He spent the war making imitation wounds. painting numbers on helmets and entertaining the troops with on-the-spot caricatures. It nearly led to a music-hall career, from school to Gray's School of but the Army would not let him go. Demobbed, be returned to Aberdeen, where he taught part-time till in 1950 be was appointed Head of Painting at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee. It was a pos that he held till 1983.

If he painted throughout that time with unfailing energy, he was also a great teacher. Renaissance approach to art, And, if in recent years the painting department in the college has made its mark, be laid the foundation. He was unfailinfluenced him, though he ingly professional saw art not also worked closely with Sivell as the expression of some March 1998.

vague, unfocused creative urge, but as a practical business that also naturally engaged the human spirit. He carried his staff and stu-

dents along with his enthusiasm and it was typical of him, as one former colleague recalls, that he burst into the class in a sleepy studio one afternoon, declaring, "Let's celebrate. It's Michel-The Second World War saw angelo's birthday!", and carried the whole class off to do just that, ably supported by his wife Vera. In their lovely house overlooking the Tay the hospitality was always warm.

Morrocco exhibited regularly, latterly with one-man shows every two or three Gallery in Edinburgh or at the Thackeray Gallery in London. His work is in public and private collections throughout Duncan Macmillan

Alberto Marrocco (Alberto Morrocco), painter and teacher: born Aberdeen 14 December 1917; Head of School of Painting, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee 1950-82; ARSA 1952, RSA 1963; RSW 1965; RP 1977; OBE 1993; married 1941 Vera Mercer (two sons, one daughter); died Dundee 10



Morrocco: Scottish directness combined with Italian warmth

Anna Maria Ortese



the last great writer of the generation that produced Italo few critics would disagree with the poet Andrea Zanzotto, who rates her as "one of the most important Italian women writers of this century". That her name rings no bells in the Englishspeaking world reflects more on the priorities of the book trade than on her own, admittedly hermetic, literary genius.

Even in Italy, recognition came late. Ortese's readers were a select band until 1993, when her historical fable \hat{I} cardillo addolorato was pubworks currently available in

topped the Italian fiction lists with an apartment in Milan for fell in with a group of young for several weeks and ended use as a writer's retreat. up selling almost 200,000 Calvino and Primo Levi. Today, copies. Ortese was nearly 80 at This deserved though belat-

> ed success was partly due to the Italian reading public's discovery that they had a magic realist in their midst to rank with the best of the Latin American myth-makers. But some of publishing house, run by Roberto Calasso, who is best known outside Italy as the author of The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony (1988). Since the mid

Ortese was born in Rome in

1914 to a working-class family. She grew up with six brothers and sisters between Potenza in the south of Italy and Tripoli in Libya, then part of Mussolini's African possessions, where her father had moved in search of work. It was in Tripoli that she wrote her first collection of the credit must also go to the stories, Angelici dolori ("Angelvigorous support of the Adelphi ic Pains"), influenced by the magic realism of writer Massimo Bontempelli, who also helped persuade Bompiani to publish the book in 1937.

In 1945 Ortese's family lished (this is the only one of her Eighties Adelphi has been moved to Naples, a city which repackaging and reissuing the still bore the scars of the Gerthe UK: it was translated as Ortese back catalogue - in edi- man occupation, with its after-The Lament of the Linnet for tions newly revised by the au- math of black marketeering shelter for the homeless for the hanteur of Gioseppe Tomasi

writers centred on the review Sud, which had an influence far beyond its three-year lifespan.

Ortese's ironic portrait of this literary clique in the epilogue of . ar most famous collection of stories, Il mare non bagna Napoli ("The Sea Does Not Reach Naples", 1953) still had the power to irritate its targets - among whom were Raffaele La Capria and Francesco Rosi - when it was republished These stories were based

partly on Ortese's articles for the weekly news magazine Il Mondo, in which she denounced the conditions of life in the Neapolitan bassifondi; she wrote from experience, having lived in a loaded syntax has something of more than a year. But she nev-

also spill over into compelling, other-worldly fantasy. The iguana is one of a series of unsettling, magical animals - including the goldfinch (or linnet) of Il cardillo addolorato and the puma of her last novel. Alonso e i visionari ("Alonso and the Visionaries", 1996) - which Ortese used to deflect her frustration at the limits, and the littleness, of the knowable world.

er accepted the "neo-realist" la-

bel, seeing the book as "a screen

on which to project one's sense

of disorientation". The novel

L'iguana, first published in

1965, is an example of how Or-

tese's disenchantment could

Her measured, ironically

"a gipsy lost in a dream". She shunned the literary salons of post-war Italy, preferring the company of her sister Maria. with whom she lived in Milan (after 1958), in Rome, and finally in Rapallo on the Ligurian coast from 1978 onwards. After Maria's death in 1995 it was her younger brother Francesco who took care of her.

Despite a steady stream of books - one every three years on average - Ortese never achieved financial independence, and in 1986 she was granted a state writer's pension. Her brief forays into journalism were limited by a refusal to modulate her writerly voice: Anna Mana Ortese, writer: born once, while covering the Giro d'Italia bicycle race for Panora-

Landolfi. Elio Vittorini, an ear- ma, she wrote that "the Giro ly enthusiast, described her as often sails close to the sweet, unremembering shores of Ortese deserves to be better

known in Britain. One hopes that Adelphi's imminent revised edition of her most autobiographical work, La Porta di Toledo ("The Gate of Toledo", first published in 1975) will soon be followed by an English translation. Two other books are available in the US: the novel The Iguana (the best introduction to Ortese's work) and a selection of short stories - the first of two projected volumes - entitled A Music Behind the Wall.

Rome B June 1914; died Rapallo,

Bernard Mellor

BERNARD MELLOR once described the ideal Registrar at a university as "a small bald fellow who walks with a stick". He left out the twinkling eyes and the sharp but friendly

"Bunny" Mellor's tenure as Registrar at Hong Kong broke records. Well-informed, cooperative and committed, he was at the centre of the university as it was transformed from a small war-abandoned outpost into a thriving centre of learning and life. Everyone in Hong Kong could identify him. Whenever he went back there after his retirement he was in great demand. He knew that he belonged.

wished to be remembered, how-writer Yang Xian-i, who joined ever, only as a Registrar, least of all as an administrator or a Letters in 1993. manager. Labels do not fit him. He wrote the history of the university (A History of the University of Hong Kong, 1978), which bestowed a doctorate on doctorate that mattered to him,

a doctorate of letters. When he had been at Oxford, his other university, be was editor of Cherwell and employed Edward Heath as a political correspondent. He was taught at Merton by the poet Edmund Blunden, who influenced his ways of thinking and feeling. His closest undergrad-

Melior would never have uate friend was the Chinese him as a Hong Kong Doctor of

It was Yang Xian-i who drew him towards China, a realm of the imagination for him, which always had a place in Mellor's heart. I found it a delight to travhim in 1974, the only kind of el with him there several times over the last 20 years. There was always poetry in the air.

His first prose work bore the memorable title Ration Cooking for Small Detachments. It was written while he was serving as a bombadier in an anti-aircraft unit defending London. In 1942 he was accepted for a commission in the Indian Army and it was from this base (through sig-

nals, cryptography and intelli- future Vice-Chancellors, Hong ried a Swiss girl, Mauricette Kumming, very quickly realising his undergraduate dream.

Romance and fact intertwined at every stage. For a time he worked as a member of a decention unit headed by Peter Fleming, the China travel writer and brother of Ian. One of their publications was a spurious version of the Illustrated London News, designed for Burma, Mellor's last piece of writing, yet unpublished, covers this adventurous period, a lifetime in itself, and his subsequent arrival in an even more adventurous China.

It was while in Kunming that Mellor met one of his in Switzerland he met and mar- of his experience which must

gence) that he was posted to Kong's fifth, (Colonel) Lindsay Jeanneret-Grosjean, in Berne in Ride, at that time Professor of Physiology. Ride returned to a devastated Hong Kong and a looted university before Mellor: he had to report back in India before flying to Hong Kong for the first time via there were always new things Rangoon in October 1945. This that he found to do. No one

was an unforgettable time, like some times since, for all who the task of creating an indelived through it in Hong Kong. pendent university in Macao, an Yet before settling in Hong Kong - if "settle" was ever the right word to use in relation to post-war Hong Kong - Mellor returned briefly to Oxford. For different reasons this was to be a momentous visit. While

adventure story in itself, the first part of which he has written. No one could have dreamed more

vividly not only of new institu-

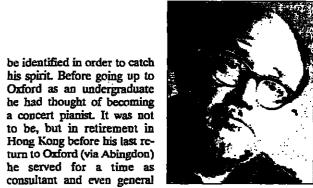
tions but of new poems or new

There was one other aspect

children.

September 1946. They had five Oxford as an undergraduate he had thought of becoming Fortunately for Bunny Mela concert pianist. It was not lor's friends there was always a to be, but in retirement in special place for friendship, Hong Kong before his last return to Oxford (via Abingdon) and in so-called retirement he served for a time as consultant and even general could have put more energy into manager to the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, which was seeking to create a professional orchestra. Throughout his life Bunny

Mellor sought for harmony, and all who shared in it with him will be sad to lose him. performing and conducting. Silence was never golden.



Mellor: adventure story

Bernard Mellor, university administrator, born Blackpool, Lancashire 8 November 1917; Registrar, University of Hong Kong 1948-74; Planning Director and Consultant, University of East Asia, Macao 1979-88; married 1946 Mauricette Jeanneret-Grosjean (five sons); died Oxford 28 january 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

DEATHS
BEYDOUN: Ziad Rafik, Emeritus
Professor of Geology at the American University of Beirut, died on Friday 6 March 1998. Funeral has taken
place in Beirut. Memorial gathering
to be announced. Donations to the
Professor Ziad Beydoum Memorial
Fund (for geological fieldwork), clo
M. Ghoussouh, Flat 2, 58 Bassett
Road, London W10 GJP.

IN MEMORIAM

REASON: Sean James, died 15 March 1997, aged 27 years, "For we have stripped away the year / With grief and work, and found its heart, / Something with which to persevere. / Something with which to make a start." Mum and Dad

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding enviror series, in Memoriam) desuit he some to write. rest services, Wedding arenter series, in Memorism) should be sent in writing to the Garacte Editor, The Indepen-dent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London EM 50L, tolephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and 379 Charmand as A. En a line CAST central. ere charged at 66.50 x line (VAT extra).

N'S BIGGEST ICAL STORES ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS TONDARDOW: The Dules of Edinburgh Founder and Chan ask to the Internatives the Dules of I disburgh founder and Chan ask to the Internatives plattene, the Dules of I disburgh Award International Founder, International Boundard Founder, the Company International States, for Barrows, the Company Internation International Polyago, Bartusha and Bernatida.

Changing of the Guard
Tobash the hospital Could Manned Regmen ments the Outer's Like Guard at Horis
Guards, 'Hote to Mattainen, Mich House
ments the Outer's Guard, at Buckingham
paints, I. Tham, head provided by the Irriv
Letands, TONORROWS The Household Consion Mounted Registration better Outer's Life
Guard at House Caneds, Them.

Birthdays

TODAY: Prince Albert of Monaco, 40; Sir Kenneth Alexander, former 40; Sir Kenneth Alexander, former principal, Stirling University, 76; Miss Pam Ayres, poet, 51; Professor Sir Michael Berry, research profes-sor, Bristol University, 57; Mr Ian Bruce MP, 51; Mr Michael Caine, actor, 65; Mr Jasper Carrott, comedian, 53; Professor Sir Colin Dollery, former Dean, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, 67; Mr Alan Elliott, former Chief Constable, Cumbria, 56; comer Cher Consader, Conditie, Sr. Lt-Gen Sir Peter Graham, former GOC, Scotland, 61; Sir Philip Holland, former MP, 81; Mr Quincy Jones, bandleader, 65; Sir Gavin Laird, chairman, Greater Manches-ter Buses North, 65; Air Chief Marshai Sir Douglas Lowe, 76; Mr John McCallum, actor and producer, 80; Lord Marsh, former chairman, Newspaper Publishers' Association, Newspaper rubishers Association, 70; Sir Eric Norris, former diplomat, 80; Mr Bill Owen, actor, 83; Sir Richard Parsons, former ambassador to Sweden, 70; Dame Betty Paterson, former chairman, North West Thames Health Authority, 82; General Paul Rader, General of the Salvation Army, 64; Miss Tessa Sanderson, javelin thrower, 42; Mr William Sillery, Headmaster, Belfast Royal Academy, 57; Mr Anthony Smith, President, Magdalen College. Oxford, 60; Miss Rita Tushingham. actress, 56; Sir Nicholas Wall, High Court judge, 53, TO-MORROW: Lord Alton of Liverpool, former MP, 48; Mr Alexander Bernstein, former chairman, Granada Group, 63; Dr David Bryer, director, Oxfam, 54; Miss Isobel Buchanan, soprano, 44; Mr James Butler, former senior partner, KPMG Peat Marwick, 69; Str Jack

Callard, former chairman, British Home Stores, 85; Sir Robert Cam-

with, High Court judge, 53; Lord Constantine of Stammore, former company chairman, 88; Mr Ry Cood-

er, folk and blues guitarist, 52; Mr Frank Dobson MP, Secretary of State for Health, 58; Professor Sir James Dunbar-Nasmith, architect, 71; Mr John Duttine, actor, 50; The Right Rev John Gibbs, former Bish-op of Coventry, 81; Professor John Gillingham, neurosurgeon, 82; Earl Haig, painter, 80; Sir Leonard Knowles, former Chief Justice of the Knowles, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas, 82; Mr Mike Love, vocal-ist, 54; Admiral Sir Raymood Lygo, former chief enecutive, British Aero-space, 74; Mr Keith McCarter, sculp-tor, 62; Professor Joan Mitchell, political economist, 78; Mr Michael Moore, chairman, Quicks Group, 62; Moore, chairman, Quicks Group, 62; Mr Robert Nye, novelist and poet, 59; Mr Ben Okri, author, 39; Sir Philip Powell, architect, 77; The Right Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Win-chester, 55; Mr Gavin Stamp, histochester, 35; 80r Gavin Stamp, insto-rian and writer, 50; Sir Roger Tunkys, Master of Pembroke Col-lege, Cambridge, 61; Mr David Wall, former Director, Royal Academy of Dancing, 52.

Anniversaries TODAY: Births: Mrs Isabella Mary Beeton (Mayson), author of house-hold and cookery books, 1836; Albert Einstein, physicist, 1879. Deaths: Karl Marx, political philosopher, 1883; Busby Berkeley (William Berkeley Enos), choreographer, 1976. Today is the Feast Day of St Eutychius or Eustathius of Carrhae, St Leobinus or Lubin and St Matil da. TOMORROW: Births: Lady (Ison. I CATO GREAT BUTTON LADY (Is-abella Augusta) Gregory (Perse), playwight and a founder of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 1852. Deaths: Aristotle Onassis, Greek ship-owner, 1975; Damo Rebecca West (Cicely Isobel Fairfield), author, 1983 Tarmourse is the East Dame? 1983. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Clement Mary Hofbauer, St Longinus, St Louise de Marillac, St Lu-cretia or Leocritia, St Matrona and St Zachary, pope.

FAITH & REASON

Who wins on the Di Wheel of Fortune?

What do we learn about ourselves from scratch cards bearing the name of Diana, Princess of Wales? asks Paul Handley, Editor of the Church Times

I want to buy a casino. I'd like to name it the Princess Diana Wheel of Fortune. You want to play roulette? Place your Di-tokens here and spin the wheel. I'm not in this for myself, you understand: 20p in every pound will go to charity. I shall apply to the Princess Diana Memorial Fund for permission to use her name. And I'll get it.

Last week I had just finished a leader in the window for the Diana lottery ought to have been allowed to rest in scratch-card. I went in and bought one. peace. It was true:

The monies generated for the fund by this lottery will go to the charities and charitable causes which were close to the Princess's heart. . .

Promoter: Michael Gibbins, Kensington Palace, London W8 4PU.

It lies on my desk as I write this. It might be squeamishness, but I can't bring myself to scratch it. What if I win the £25,000? We could use a new bathroom. downstairs. The Di loo, perhaps? More likely, my usual luck will prevail: Di. you've let me down.

In what conceivable way does this scratch-card preserve the Princess's good name? People buy lottery cards and tickets because they want to gamble, or, more accurately, win; if they wanted to give to charity they would give. So it's a deal that's being offered by the fund: you support Diana's favourite charities and we'll give you the chance to win £25,000. When she was alive, the Princess of Wales was not insusceptible to the deals required by for my own paper praising the fund for fame and fortune. She danced at charits efforts to keep the name of the ity galas in the US; she had her pho-Princess pure (though I questioned this tograph taken with landmine victims. business of trademarking the Princess's But such a scheme as this would not image). Walking past a newsagent the have been countenanced by even the following morning, I spotted a poster Duchess of York. In death the Princess

> The moral high ground on this issue is, admittedly, not very high, and those who attempt to stand there find it pretty swampy. The leprosy sufferers

won't care particularly bow the money was raised. And there is little to choose between the different forms of gambling, from village-fete raffles to City investments. Church leaders, in the main, declined to criticise the National Lottery when it was launched, and besides, the days when the Church might have kept itself untainted are long gone. Even those churches which abjure gambling for money have somehow to explain away a faith that seems to offer a similar sort of deal: "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." As a result, the gospel of pros-

from the fund, announced last Monday,

South America and parts of Africa. The most recent example to come my way was a set of photocopied pages from Miracle Money, an American Pentecostalist tract, "John", the author, was visited one night by a disconsolate

perity has taken hold in many places

around the world, most particularly in

Jesus: "John, I usually cannot multiply back to my children the money they give me," I asked, "Why not, Lord? Your Word says

"My children usually make two mistakes when they give to me. First, they seldom give

who will benefit from the first pay-outs the exact amount I tell them to give. . . Second, they usually give without expecting any-thing specific back in return. John, the multiplication of money back to the giver is a miracle, and my miracles operate by faith. When my people give without expecting anything back, they have not given in faith."

Like all heretical nonsense, this approaches the truth then distorts it grotesquely. Yes, there are demands for payment in most of the world faiths, in the currency of prayer, devotion, and alms-giving (and support of the priesthood); and there are offers of a reward, in terms not only of eternal life but often some sort of help and support in this world. But the idea of our doing a deal with God is illusory: in a relationship with an almighty creator, we can only receive. The divine call, though, is not to passive acceptance but to partnership. As a consequence, Christians use this season of Lent to reflect on how they can emulate God's complete and unconditional giving of himself on the cross.

But sacrifice, one suspects, is a concept "John" is unfamiliar with This is where the Memorial Fund has got it so wrong. Princess Diana's memory should inspire us to acts of selfless generosity, not grasping transactions among the cheap sweets and the

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Drop the humbug about hunting

"DADDY, do most people think fox-hunting should be banned?" Yes, dear, according to a Gallup poll this month two-thirds of grown-ups in Britain think it should be. "And do most Members of Parliament think hunting should be banned?" Yes, dear, last November they voted by 411 to 151 to ban it. "Oh, good, so it is against the law now, then." Well, not exactly; you see, there are some even more important people, called the Cabinet... "And they don't think hunting should be banned?" Er, it's a bit more complicated than that: 18 of them say it should be banned and two say it shouldn't. "Oh, don't they say what they mean, then?" Not

"Daddy, is Tony Blair in the Cabinet?" Yes, he is the most important one. "And what does he think?" Well, a girl of about your age wrote a letter to ask him, and he wrote back saying, "I do think hunting is wrong and I will vote in favour of a ban in the House of Commons." "But that doesn't mean what I think it means, does it?" No, I'm afraid not, dear.

Let us translate the Prime Minister's words into plain English for his 11-year-old correspondent, Roseanne Mills: "I do think hunting is wrong, but not so wrong that I want to pass a law against it, and I will vote in favour of a ban in the House of Commons, so long as it is a purely symbolic gesture." Thus amplified, Mr Blair's position suddenly becomes a perfectly reasonable one. So what is going on here? At one level, he is making a cold political analysis about the sorts of issues which can sway floating voters in all the rural and semi-rural seats which Labour won for the first time last May.

One reason for the double-talk is that he does not want to admit that he and the Cabinet care more about the strong views of Barbour-jackcted Middle England than the weak views of the majority, with the rights of foxes coming a rather distant third.

Another reason why the Prime Minister is reluctant to level with Ms Mills and the rest of us is that he does not want to undermine the charade of representative democracy which assumes that we send our MPs to Westminster to exercise their judgement on our behalf. The issue of fox-hunting has been presented as a "free vote", a matter of tender consciences and open government, but the truth is that a free vote of the legislature stands only by permission of the executive. This is a tricky one for a Labour Party which inveighed against the dictatorship of the executive over the legislature in the Thatcher era, when all manner of measures were railroaded through that would not have been supported in, say, a secret ballot.

It turns out, then, that all the fine talk about free votes is cover for hard-nosed calculation of party political advantage. But where Mr Blair has lost the plot is in thinking that the voters would object if he spelt out what is really going on. The Government's position has now become so double-dealing and demeaning that it is doing more damage than if the Prime Minister simply told the animal rights movement he disagreed with them. Having raised expectations among the pro-fox legions and thoroughly confused his own backbenchers, the Home Secretary this week declared: "I do not see a role for Government. We do not have a mandate for it." These are, to stay with the world of wild mammals for a moment, weasel words.

Jack Straw is pedantically right: the Labour Party has no formal mandate in the sense that its manifesto promised only a free vote. But that



just takes us back to the previous layer of double-talk. How much more of a mandate does the Government really need than public opinion, a vote of the Commons and the publicly-expressed personal views of its own members?

Because the Government has not been straight with people, yesterday's fizzling-out of Michael Foster's Bill is not and cannot be the end of the matter. The pro-hunters still feel threatened, and the pro-fox lobby still have their righteous tails up.

It is time for Mr Blair to make some tough choices, say what he means and mean what he says, and trade some short-term popularity for longterm credibility. He should say that he does not like fox-hunting. It is objectionable that people should take pleasure from the tearing apart of one animal by another, and some of the subsidiary practices such as

the "hlooding" of children are little short of barbaric. But he - or whoever drafted that letter to Ms Mills - should avoid describing fox-hunting as "wrong": as one with a strong ethical basis to his politics, such language gets him into difficult territory. Why will he vote (albeit ineffectively) to outlaw hunting? If adultery is wrong, should it be legislated against? If abortion is wrong, should it be illegal? On the next countryside march, expect to see placards proclaiming "A huntsman's right to choose". And if hunting is "wrong", how much more or less wrong

is the greater daily brutality of abattoirs and intensive farming? The important point is that it should be possible to disapprove of things without trying to have them banned. If our first response to things we do not like is to seek to ban them, we will soon find ourselves living in an illiberal society, and we will have failed to reach a mature understanding of representative democracy.

So the House of Commons came to the right conclusion yesterday, by in effect declining to criminalise one particular method of the necessary culling of foxes. But it would have been better if the Government had been prepared to talk about the need to balance conflicting priorities and to protect minority views in a democracy.

Instead of hiding behind pious sentiments, while justifying their contrary actions to themselves as cold political necessity, it would help if politicians were prepared to give us the real reasons why Mr Foster's Bill died yesterday. They should not be afraid to make the argument in public about the need to balance conflicting imperatives and to protect minority views from the tyranny of democracy. Even an 11-year-old could



High on the hog: Two-month-old Tamworth/Berkshire cross weaners on a farm in Essex

Photograph: Brian Harris A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171-293-2534

BBC and Parliament

YOU REPORTED (27 February) that, following a confrontation between the chairman of the BBC and Gerald Kaufman MP, Sir Ch. 'stopher Bland has written to make clear that he has no intention of complying with the wishes of the Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport that he delay implementation of the BBC's plans to change its coverage of Parliament until the committee has published its own report next month.

You quote Sir Christopher as saying he believes such an undertaking would seriously compromise the independence of the BBC Governors.

This claim highlights a convenient arisen over the corporation's duties towards Parliament. There is unishould be "independent"; the question is -- independent of what? Of day- IAN CURTEIS to-day editorial interference by the Somerford Keynes, Gloucestershire Government, certainly, Independent of the sovereignty of Parliament, of the Royal Charter and Agreement (themselves expressing Parliament's will), of the national interest or of the

citizen licence-paver, surely not. A Select Committee is not the Government. It is an all-party affair, representative of all strands of the House of Commons. It is not just one of the vital organs of our society, alongside broadcasting; it is part of the sovereign organ. For a healthy and civilised democracy, those vital organs must have respect for each other's functions and not - as broadcasting seems increasing to do - continually try to trump, upstage, browbeat or outsmart one another. The increasing neglect of parliamentary proceedings by the media, when they are not actively pouring scorn on them, is neglect and scorn poured on our unique and precious form of democracy itself.

Sir Christopher's defiance of the Select Committee is a prime examples of the belief of far too many media people that they somehow lead,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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to the overall anatomy of the society of which they are part whether they like it or not. Any organisation embarking on that route is well on the way to becoming an overmighty subject, which carries the seeds of its own rapid destruction, as the last overmighty subject, the trades unions, found not so very long ago.

I do urge Sir Christopher to think again and delay the BBC's plans only intellectual smokescreen that has until next month, thereby demonstrating the corporation's overriding interest in the health of the nation it mination in the post-war settleversal agreement that the BBC serves, rather than the heady machismo of its own self-importance.

Border disputes

THE "new world order" seems to rest on a dogma never openly proclaimed - that borders must never be changed, even if the states defined by them have proved unviable. Thus condemnation of the Serb use of force is followed by a request in Parliament for an assurance that the Government will not support independence for Kosovo, or its union with Albania. Robin Cook offers instant assurance: "There is no map for a greater Croatia, a greater Serbia. or a greater Albania."

banians, like the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia, must for ever remain part of a state they detest. There must be an "end to violence" and a "negotiated settlement".

The policy of all borders being exdoomed attempt to freeze the course of history. It is particularly absurd in churches, rather than any "turning the case of Yugoslavia, since the borders concerned were those of or should devele, agenda separate provinces, not independent states. Chichester, West Susser

I believe this policy rests principally on the experience of the 1938 were redrawn in order to prevent war, and this did not prevent war. For being modern, we appear to be going into the next century with a foreign policy stance conditioned by the experience of the Second World

over Iraq showed. Those people denied self-determents will not go away. Neither repression nor negotiation solves ethnic problems: they are solved only by moving populations or changing borders. Since the latter is obviously the more humane, why must it never even be discussed?

JOHN EDMONDSON Glastonbury, Somerset

Blair in church

THE CAPTION to your picture of the Prime Minister at church during the Labour Party Conference (4 March) is incorrect. The service was not a Catholic Mass, but an Anglican Eucharist celebrated in Brighton Parish Church by the Bishop of Chichester (who also appears In other words, the Kosovo Al- in your picture greeting Mrs Blair). The Prime Minister is pictured in conversation with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Arundel and Brighton who had been invited to preach at the service.

The occasion aptly illustrates the ternally sacred is an artificial and Prime Minister's commenical outlook. as well as the convergence of the to Rome". Canon PETER ATKINSON

Philip's memorial

Munich agreement, where borders YOUR "In the News" article on Prince Philip (9 March) commented: "It is unlikely he will ever have all this government's obsession with a memorial named after him." He already has - the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

it as a group leader, and on several War, as the recent spate of rictoric occasions have had the pleasure of Latin is actually still a spoken lanpany of young people from all back- modern -day administrative idiom. grounds he was attentive, cheerful and remarkably well informed.

> Albert Memorial and the thousands guage which is closer to Latin, as of young people who have enjoyed the programme of achievement and adventure, I know which the Duke of Edinburgh would happily choose. The Rev J CLIVE TOUGHER Ashbourne, Derbyshire

Indeed, sir?

I TRUST that the newly affluent Independent can afford for its library a book starring the inimitable Jeeves, so that your staff may be reminded that he was not a butler, but a gentleman's personal gentleman. It is indeed time you moved upmarket, as YOUR NEW proprietorial arrangepromised, in the light of your report "School to teach Jeeves a lesson" (12 March). Jeeves buttled only once in a Wodehouse moon, to help out his butler uncle Charlie Silversmith. MURRAY HEDGCOCK

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) London SW14

IN YOUR leading article "Buttling for Britain" (12 March) you state: "Britain buttles better". Of course we are.

PAULBUTTLE Keswick, Cumbria

Modern Latin

PICTURE OF THE DAY

HENRY WICKENS (letter, 11 March) rather overstates his case in arguing that the Greeks and other Orthodox nations would object to the idea of Latin becoming the lingua franca of the European Union.

Latin was, for several centuries affer the foundation of Constantinople, the administrative language of the Roman Empire (both East and West). It is true that modern Greek owes (some of) its origins to classical Greek, in the same way that rgh's Award Scheme. French, Catalan, Spanish, Por-For many years I have worked in tuguese and Italian have their roots in Latin; but, unlike classical Greek, meeting Prince Philip. In the com- guage, therefore serviceable for

It is also true that the Bulgars speak a variant of the Slavonic lan-If there were a choice between the guage, but the Romanians have a lantheir very name suggests, than any west European language.

> As to the argument from religion, the Germans might well protest at their language not being recognised as an internal language of the Commission on the grounds that German was the language of the Reformation. But then as we all learnt from our great uncles, God is an Englishman! JOHN F CRAWFORD Thurlestone, Devon

Age no bar

ment seems promising. Lots of luck. I am disconcerted to learn, bowever, that you plan to appeal to "a young professional, high-income, educated readership" (report, 12 March) Will there be no appeal to middle-aged - even old - "high-income, educared, etc"? Not only are we, too, "truly looking for an independent viewpoint", some of us have more money than some of them. STEWART RUSSELL Landon SE10

[We mean "young in spirit" - Eds]

LETTER from THE EDITOR

IT'S BEEN a great week for The Independent and The Independent on Sunday. On Wednesday, our two titles were bought by Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers Group. We are now guaranteed strong financial security, and we have an exhilarating brief to take the papers to the top of the market, to make them the best most intelligent reads around. Andrew Marr, who returned this week to the papers after a short absence, and I will be working towards this end together. Our partnership has raised more than a few cynical eyebrows this week, but I'm delighted at the prospect of working with Andy. As he said yesterday, we're two very different people, with different histories and prejudices and talents. But newspapers are big places and they need as much input as possible. From this week, The Independent has become a much more open and lateral-thinking organisation. It is immensely exciting to be part of it.

ON THURSDAY night, we took our campaign for tax relief on arts funding to the Royal Academy, where Melvyn Bragg chaired a debate on the pros and cons of adopting the long-established American system of arts support. There it is simple. Make a donation to your local theatre, the Metropolican museum, or a poetry society and you can claim our arts are suffering - in crisis, many would say.

But the arts should never be underestimated. As Jude Kelly, director of the west Yorkshire Playhouse, put it: "The Government simply doesn't understand how the arts can change lives. There was once a time when it was embarrassing to think that reading and writing - or women's rights - were essential parts of humanising and enhancing a society. No longer true. Now the arts need to be looked at in this way - they're as vital to well being as health, education and sewerage."

THEY'RE ALSO vital to communities. I grew up in Ludlow, Shropshire, and every year they perform Shakespeare inside the castle walls. The first play I attended was Macheth - marvellous at night. with the floodlit grey stone walls providing a backdrop to the stage set. Milton's Comus was first staged in Ludlow Castle, so the organisers were inheriting a long tradition. Over the years, the festival has become the high point of the town's year. The Shakespeare production is now just a part of a fortnight-long celebration of all forms of art ted we've won. - painting, jazz, dance, pottery, book readings. Almost the entire town is involved. It is good for

instant, uncomplicated tax relief. Here, we're commerce, sociability and ultimately for combound up in interminable red tape and as a result munity. Mark Fisher, Minister for the Arts, was present at our debate on Thursday and he warned us that we were in for "a very long campaign". I guess that spells gloomy news for us in next Tuesday's budget, but he did add that he welcomed campaigns like ours as they raised the profile of this important issue and, ultimately, would help keep the arts vital. So, to all our readers who have written in with their support, a very big thank you. We're not giving up the fight yet.

FINALLY, this week saw International Women's day. I barely noticed it this year, unlike in 1971, when 5,000 demonstrated for equal pay rights, childcare facilities, contraception and abortion. Nowadays, we don't seem to know what IWD is - or should be - about. I find this somewhat sad, but it is probably inevitable. Women have made coormous strides in the past 25 years. Maybe it is now time to let other more needy groups take over these endless "days". After all, if National Impotence day now shares its 24-hour slot with Valentine's Day, then maybe its time we admit-

ROSIE BOYCOTT

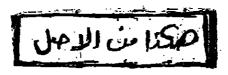
QUOTE UNQUOTE

"I think it's better if she stays in the House of Commons, don't you? At least it keeps her off the stage" - Miriam Margolyes, actress, on Glenda Jackson, now a transport minister.

"I prefer mashed potato to exercise. So I have - how you say it? - muscles like mashed potatoes" --- jean-Paul Gaultier, fashion designer.

"I am not sure if I am ironically post-modern or post-modern ironical" --Terry Wogan, broodcoster.

"We are a young, vibrant, modern and forward-looking organisation made up of people with vision and energy. We are not old duffers" ---Tim Lamb, chief executive of the English Cricket Board



Where I'll be in 2028, when asteroid XFII hits our planet

ian plans in the light of this new information, other thoughts began to crowd into my already cluttered head. The first thing I realised was that - contrary to my earlier belief - the powers that be would not be able to suppress all knowledge of impending doom while they prepared special bunkers for themselves on Mars. Some bloody attention-seeking astrono-

Then I began to wonder what the effect of this certain knowledge was going to be on my fellow citizens. In the first

seconds after hearing the story of XF11 nearly everyone I knew calculated exactly how old they'd be at the moment of im-

pact. Those who would still be under 60 felt very gloomy indeed, almost cheated in

fact. It was hard to escape a sense of be-

ing envied for already having made it to

Then there was the difficulty in dealing

with everyday issues and transactions that were likely to be transformed. Pensions and mortgages, with their finite payment periods now likely to be curtailed, were

the most obvious. But what was going to

it be easier or harder to sell up and

happen to house prices generally? Would

And anyway, didn't much of this de-

pend on exactly where the asteroid struck

us? If New Zealand or the Pacific looked

like being the landing site for XF11, then

we Britishers might well survive, albeit in

the perpetual gloom of a dust cloud (re-

member, loads of Californians get by in

LA). If, however, it looked like Birming-

ham was going to be the epicentre of an

to decide whether to stay or to go. The

odious Monday Club would hopefully be

faced with busloads of Anglo-Caribbeans,

suddenly anxious to take them up on their

Many vexed policy discussions would

simply cease. There wouldn't seem to be

summit: no-one would worry much about

would become redundant because every-

body would smoke. The birth rate would

fall dramatically and fifteen years later -

On the plus side many more young

women might be willing to sleep with old-

er men who will be using the (now) more

convincing "tomorrow we die" pretext. If

But alas, every impacting asteroid has

its downside. Many of our less intellectu-

fin-de-siècle prompts interestingly de-

bauched behaviour, just think what de-

lights fin-du-monde might not lead to!

ally robust fellow humans will join the

growing ranks of vindicated Millennari-

ans, seeking salvation through the drink-

ing of urine, the eating of scorpions and

deities from Budleigh Salterton. They will

want to convert all of us and it will make

This last prospect alone - I thought -

should be enough to prompt an interna-

from its present course. Surely a probe -

American smart bomb, piloted by a mem-

ber of the RAF, guided by Microsoft, de-

organised by Peter Mandelson - could be

launched at some point in the next thirty

years, and three decades of tedious evan-

And then Nasa announced that, actually, XF11 was coming nowhere near us.

tional effort aimed at diverting XF11

funded by the lottery, containing an

signed by Alexander McQueen and

gelism averted?

We had been spared.

arguing with a whole sect of Trotskyists

the worshipping of little pony-tailed

seem like a summer holiday.

as a result - so would the incidence of

much point in holding another Earth

global warming. Tobacco advertising

kind offer of funded repatriation.

impending collision, then one would have

mist would be sure to blab.



DAVID **AARONOVITCH**

There are so many ways to prepare to meet our doom, but one scares me more than all the others ...

"WELL," I thought to myself yesterday afternoon, "I know what I was planning to do on Thursday, 26 October, 2028. Very roughly. I was thinking of spending the day at home in Il Campanibile - our rosewashed farm-house near Siena - proofreading the pages of my magnum opus, A Time Of Giants: Marr and Boycott at Canary Wharf and resting. In the late autumnal afternoon (say, roundabout 5.30), I would have just awoken from my nap, taken my age retardants and been preparing for a bout of enhanced lovemaking with my hormonally-replaced partner, before doing my statutory 30 lengths of the

"But now," my thought continued, "I probably won't be able to do any of those things, because - at precisely that time some bloody great lump of space rock is due to punch a hole in the atmosphere and crash into the earth, extinguishing much life and putting a substantial dent in the Marr-Boycott market."

This uncomfortable cogitation had, of course, been set off by authoritative reports from a body called the International Astronomical Union, that a large asteroid (fireball XF11) was definitely on course to pass within a few thousand miles of the earth. In space terms that is very close (actually in Earth terms it's pretty close too; Aberdeen often seems further away than that).

Now, it was something similar - except four times larger - that landed on the Yucatan peninsula sometime in the Cretaceous period, and left us with only crocodiles, rhinos and the Countryside Alliance to remind us of the time when dinosaurs ruled the earth. XF11, if it were to hit us, would kill between a quarter and a half of the world's population, we were told, and leave large parts of the earth uninhabitable.

As I digested the need to alter my Ital-

In Blair's Britain, everyone is included – even the outcasts



TREVOR PHILLIPS

New Labour has found a way to cast its net over just about everyone. And why not?

IT HAD to come. This Government is so damned inclusive, that it would only be a matter of time before it was caught locked in embrace with some of Labour's traditional enemies. The first signs came with the rash of business appointments to government jobs - Lord Simons, for example. Then Sports Minister Tony Banks brought in his old Tory sparring partner David Mellor to speak up for football fans. Those who stalk the corridors of Downing Street and Millbank tell me that you can hardly go for a pee without running into Liberal Democrats taking a break from the latest joint committee on constitutional reform. Ministers even turned up on the Countryside March, which was called to lambast the Government for letting down rural voters. And the Prime Minister has generously donated some of his old speeches and ideas to the Leader of the Opposition for

use in foreign parts. Now ministers are drawing the consumers of public services into their embrace. It will not endear them to the professional middle classes, whose ardour for New Labour is cooling faster than that of a dog doused in a bucket of cold water. The sight of Health Secretary Frank Dobson's porters on Health Authorities, will put the wind up high arts are increasingly irritated by the Government's love affair with the visigoths from the design, fashion and music industries.

But it is Education Secretary David Blunkett who is perhaps breaching the most profound taboo. He is backing efforts to ask children their opinions about their schools. This should send a shudder through the teaching profession. It is not a tightly-controlled New Labour exercise in which a few budding Tony Blairs are asked to read their best essay about "My School" to their adoring parents and indulgent teachers; this is something else trades unions.

The public sector union Unison and its partner the National Association of Social Workers in Education have published a survey showing that up to half a million pupils a day are involved in truancy, and some 80,000 hardly ever turn up to classes at all. The police say that these are the kids who then do drugs and petty crime, and cause serious headaches all round. I will leave aside the question of what their parents are doing whilst all this is going on and concentrate on what the schools might do. Almost every effort has been unsuccessful sin bins, punishments of various kinds, exclusion. So where should we look for new an-

the problem. They have set up children's panels made up of persistent truants to talk about what would bring them back to the classroom. Inevitably, at their first meetings, the children emphasized their boredom in class. More interestingly however, they pointed to favouritism by teachers, and claimed that a later start to the school day might be more

recognition on both fronts. Who knows where the exercise will go? But you do not have to embrace the whole Blairite project to grasp the valaltogether, and it comes from ue of the poacher turned game-

palatable. Anybody who can

remember their own teenage

years will give a silent nod of

a most unexpected source of keeper. The police now use new and innovative ideas: two "former" burglars to advise on Germaine Greer to be appointed to the Chair of the English Cricket Board today. their efforts in crime prevention; one such told me a couple of years ago that he was possibilities seem endless. Permaking a better living showing haps when Robin Cook is pondering his next appointment to the police his methods than clambering through winthe European Commission, Teresa Gorman, who seems

Two truants take a break from advising the Government's social exclusion unit

dows.Others have traded in their burglars' balaclavas for contracts with motor manufacturers and insurance companies desperate to find ways of reducing the nation's soar-

us how we might go even fur- the next reshuffle take him to ther. Why should those who the Social Security department The unions have done the contribute to solutions have to with a special brief to ensure obvious thing - which some- be reformed at all? Might we that we get value for money? times is the right thing: they are not learn more from the unre- And shouldn't the Chancellor asking the culprits to advise on constructed wicked? After all, be actively searching out Mr put our team on the rack yet

Ken Livingstone for the Treasury team, perhaps to help the Paymaster-General in his work in devising a fairer tax regime? This would be inclusiveness on Perhaps this is all a little too imaginative. If so, we could be-

In the political sphere the

unnaturally quiet at present,

should be given something use-

ful to do in Brussels. Lord

Irvine is building a reputation

gin slowly, and simply start to think of opening some new political dialogues. There are

the political spectrum can talk to each other without the need to draw imaginary lines between themselves. This makes politics petty and dull; it also obscures the real divisions in our society - between urban and rural, between young and old, between secular and religious. I doubt if we need any new think tanks or forums; but we certainly need those that exist to begin to engage more with their traditional enemies. A modern political society cannot afford a dialogue of the deaf. We will know something is stirring when the rightist intellectual David Willetts is asked to serve on the board of a leftleaning think tank, or Peter Lilley addresses a TUC economic

One example of a poacher turned gamekeeper who has brought home the bacon is on display in the Caribbean. where on the first day to the current Test the West Indies again. Several of the England party could have qualified to play for the West Indies by virtue of having Caribbean parents. With a humiliating first innings looming, it was Mark Ramprakash, the Middlesex captain, and a Londoner of Guyanese extraction. who came to the rescue with yet another outstanding performance. Thank God he's on



Photograph: Rui Xavier

as a man who knows a thing or ing autocrime figures. two about extravagant spending on the public purse; might The children's panels show

Might we not have a lot to learn

from the unreconstructed wicked?

even priests spend time studying the works of Lucifer.

For example, I wonder what the Equal Opportunities Commission would make of the appointment of Peter Stringfellow, who probably knows more about sexism than any other Briton alive. Might the Commission for Racial Equality benefit from the advice of National Front veterans like John Bean? Would Jo Brand - smoker and drinker - be the right sort of medicine for a Health Authority? It is certainly time that Kelvin Mackenzie, the guru of modern tabloid journalism found his way on to the Press Complaints Commission: and I

would personally campaign for

still relatively few places where people from different parts of our side, not theirs. PERSONAL LOANS

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Coca-Cola, Jane Austen – just what makes a classic?



BOYD TONKIN

Does Michael Foot's just republished 'Guilty Men' have the marks to enter the canon of Great Books?

MICHAEL FOOT never made it into Number 10, but this summer the former Labour leader will gain an honour that might please him even more. He becomes a Classic. Guilty Men, the scorching anti-appeasement polemic that Foot co-authored in 1940 under the joint pseudonym of "Cato", will appear in the Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics list. Does he deserve to share a catalogue with the likes of Proust, Kafka and Woolf. And if not, why not?

Canon-making and canonchanging preoccupies our archive-minded pre-millennial time. Far from drowning in a sea of anything-goes relativism, as the doomsters claim, we draw up lists, compile charts and obsessively play at Ins and Outs. Last year, the customers of Waterstone's caused a seismic shock among the literati when they dared to place Tolkien's Lord of the Rings at the top of the chain's Books of the

Century poll. At the time, the fuss merely amused me. Then the film and music magazines got in on the game. First it emerged that today's amnesiac cine-buffs imagine that the art began with Star Wars and probably think

with Disgusted of Tunbridge wizards (as in "Classic Coke")

Classics lists make waves, but they also make money. This month, Oxford World's Classics resurface in a stylish new format, 90 years after Oxford University Press first acquired the brand from an entreprenuer who (like all classics publishers) dreamed of the pots of gold that lurk in noncopyright material with a firm niche on the syllabus. These

simply means the old stuff they want to go on selling anyway. Some recent bids to revise the canon do have an air of special pleading (and canny marketing) about them. When Virago's Carmen Callil bought the old plates of forgotten novels by women authors and clad them in deep green as Modern Classics, she did resurrect a few neglected geniuses, such as Antonia White. Others were days, they can also hope to of- just period-pieces brought back

> Every man with a bellyful of classics is an enemy to the human race'

screenwriters. As the Hollywood joke put it when Gwyneth Paltrow starred in Jane Austen's Emma: they've made a period re-make of Chieless.

Meanwhile, David Campbell of Everyman's Library has just picked up more than £4m of Lottery cash to help him put a set of his titles in every state school. "Literature is news that stays news," trumpeted Exra Pound. It also stays in profit.

So art-objects called "classics" proliferate, but does the concept's popularity just devalue its meaning? After all, the term when used by marketing an enemy to the human race."

fer works with ready-cooked ap- into circulation by a social peal for TV and movie movement that caught the jetsam of past fashions in its slip-

At the other extreme, T S Eliot famously denied that English literature has any classics at all. Writing in 1944, he judged Shakespeare by the "universal" standards of Virgil and Dante, and labelled him a mere provincial maverick. Eliot anchors the idea of a classic firmly to the lofty heritage of Greece and Rome and the imperial cultures that emulated them. And that, of course, is why many people distrust the notion. "Every man with a belivful of the classics is

pressors forced on unwilling subject peoples (including children everywhere) - the classroom equivalent of Gatling guns and Jim Crow laws. Yet the reaction to "imperial" curricula has taken the

thundered Henry Miller in

Tropic of Cancer (that 20th-

century classic). In this light, the

classic means the totems of op-

form not of relativism, but pluralism. The scope of the classic merely grows to embrace everybody's sacred works. Penguin may offer their new, suacily unexpurgated edition of Aesop's Fables, but now Oxford boasts a volume of beastly tales from the Sanskrit, The Pancatantra. Our canons have expanded, not collapsed.

When Walter Mosley (judged by Bill Clinton as a classic among thriller writers) was in London recently, he recalled hearing the poet Allen Ginsberg advocate a catch-all canon that would welcome the Bhagavad Gita as well as the Oresteian trilogy. "Aw, man," thought the young Mosley, "Do I really have to read all this stuff?" I'm afraid so. The scrambled, mingled traditions that mark our culture without frontiers mean that the wouldbe "educated person" has beavier baggage than ever to carry.

So which standards should apply in the booming Classics supermarket? Nick Hornby's novel High Fidelity shrewdly

forting lists as sticking-plaster for fractured lives as its musicmaven hero compiles his Top Five for every conceivable pop genre. In homage to Hornby, here are my Top Five criteria for would-be classic art-works: l. Endurance over time.

2. The strength to cross barriers when made accessible to audiences beyond its cultural 3. The power to define a genre,

at their highest peak or else by fixing a new form. 4. A compelling connection to the fundamental forces in hu-

man experience. 5. An ability to yield new interpretations that make sense in spite of diverse emphases.

Armed with these yardsticks, how does Guilty Men measure up? It survives and inspires others as a benchmark for controversial prose in a Swiftian mode of savage irony (1 and 3). It speaks from a people besieged by aggressors about resistance to tyrants and the defence of liberty (2 and 4). Like many other political works, though, the fifth gear is lacking. It means just what it means, without a rich hinterland of ambiguity or multiplicity. Still, "Cato"'s blast deserves to pass its Classic MoT. Congratulations, Michael Foot: the

either by exhibiting its qualities

doors of Immortality are swinging open before you.

that Fellini is a sexual practice. Then the airhead readers of the rock press duly chose the likes of Radiohead and the Verve ahead of Hendrix, Dylan or the Stones. I began to sympathise

GUS surprises City with £500m American bid

By Nigel Cope City Correspondent

GREAT Universal Stores made a surprise move yesterday when it agreed to pay £500m for an American database and credit referencing company while it is still embroiled in the £1.6bn hos-

tile bid for Argos.

GUS is buying Metromail

Corporation, of Lombard, Illinois, in a deal which analysts said made the company an even more powerful player in the fast-growing US information

The company denied the deal might distract management from the Argos bid. Lord Wolfson, chairman of GUS, said: "We are a diversified group and the management team that has been working on this deal is not the same as the ones that has been processing Argos. There will be no

Analysts expressed surprise at the timing of the deal but said GUS could cope. "I don't imagine they would have done this if would detract form the £1bn for Experian, one of Argos bid," said Alexia Walker at Paribas, Mark Josefson at Panmure Gordon added a note of caution: "It probably slightly reduces their ability to increase their offer for Argos, but with its strong balance sheet it could still pull it off." GUS shares fell 11.5p to 773.5p on

the news. Lord Wolfson said there would be significant synergies in terms of product development and costs with its Direct Marketing Technology business, another US data company which GUS acquired for £300m last April. Metromail specialises in sectors such as telecommunications while D-Tech concentrates on financial services and Thomas. catalogue shopping data.

D-Tech approached Metromail with a view to a merger last year. After GUS acquired D-Tech, it too started to look at the possibilities of putting together the two businesses whose head offices are just 10 miles

Analysts appeared support-ive of the deal. "Before GUS bid for Argos, this was the deal everyone expected them to do. GUS' balance sheet is strong and it can easily afford to do both this and Argos and still have relatively low gearing," said Ashley Thomas, at SG Securi-

GUS had net cash of £600m net debt of £1.9bn if its succeeds in its bid for Argos as well as the Metromail acquisition.

GUS is already a significant information market. In November 1996, just three months after Lord Wolfson became chairman, GUS paid companies. Since then Lord Wolfson has pulled off a string of deals in both its information and its retailing businesses. "He seems to be transforming er at 607p.

the company," said Mr

Under the terms of the deal GUS is paying \$31.50 (£19.10) per share which include taking on the company's debts. The deal has the backing of RR Donnelly, a printing company and the Metromail management which between them own 40 per cent of the shares

GUS has paid a high price for a business which recorded a loss of \$1.4m on sales of \$328m last year. However, this was after exceptional items of \$37m. The company made pretax profits of \$26.5m in the pre-

Lord Wolfson admitted that GUS had paid a full price but at its last year end and will have added: "The acquisition will unite two complementary businesses bringing economies of scale and a wider range of services which will be to the benoperator in the US credit and effit of the customers of both companies."

Bart Faber, chairman and chief executive officer of Metromail, said the information and database industry was consoli-America's largest database dating and that this deal represented a way of taking advantage of growth opportu-

Argos shares closed 5p low-

LORD WOLFSON'S ACQUISITION SPREE

Aug 96 Lord Wolfson appointed GUS chairman

Spends (1 bn on Experian, US credit agency Signs £900m property joint venture with British Land

Buys Direct Marketing Technology of US for £300m Pays Burton £20m for Innovations mail order Buys SG2, French information group for £70m

Launches £1.6bn hostile bid for Argos Feb 98 Spends £500m on Metromail, US database company

RAGE SOFTWARE, the games group, yesterday announced that it had signed a deal to develop a 'shoot 'em up' game for the Sony Playstation, the games console beloved by teenagers. Details of the game, which will be released in 1999, are secret but Rage promised it would mix 'addictive gameplay with stunning graphics'. Shares in Rage jumped 3.5p to 14.5p or 30 per cent on news of the deal. Sony's

Playstation is one of the most successful games consoles around, with more than 30 million installed world-wide. Its games include the popular Sonic the Hedgehog (above). Paul Finnegan, Rage's managing director, said: 'We are very much aware of the fantastic opportunities that this deal represents us as a company.' The news follows closely on a deal with Compaq to load Rage's Incoming

game on all of the computer firm's Presario 4600, and 4800 personal computers. Juan Montes, vicepresident of development at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. said the contract showed the company's commitment to attracting the best within the software development business. We have seer the initial game design and are very excited by this product's potential,' he said.

Barings creditors to get limited payouts

CREDITORS of Barings, which collapsed in 1995 after Nick Leeson ran up debts of more than £800m, could receive pay-outs later this month.

Erust & Young, the bank's liquidator, vesterday outlined terms of the proposals, which should result in a pay-out of £190m to Barings' bondholders.

Alan Bloom, national head of corporate recovery at Ernst & Young, called the proposals "a major step forward". He added: "Agreement with the creditors by the summer would be very pleasing."

Three classes of bondholders lent Barings a total of £275m between 1986 and 1994. Investors included major life and pension funds and Downside. Britain's oldest Roman Catholic public school.

However, under the proposals put forward yesterday, not all bondholders will be fully recompensed.

Those investors who bought Barings' floated rate notes in 1994 [the 1994 notes] stand to gain most. These bondholders lent the bank a total of \$150m (£90.1m), and will be repaid 6 their initial investment in full, with interest.

rests

George Seligman, a partner in Slaughter & May and an adviser to Ernst & Young, said: "Holders of the 1994 notes will be delighted with this."

Holders of 1986 notes will receive \$59 per \$100 invested. Holders of 1994 perpetuals will receive £24 per £100 invested.

Jonathan Stone, who heads a pressure group representing holders of 1994 perpetuals, called the settlement "disappointing", saying he would have liked to see bondholders being fully recompensed. But Mr Stone said he expected the bondholders to accept the plan. "Something is better than nothing", he said.

Mr Seligman, of Slaughter & May, explained that the 1986 notes were issued on less favourable terms than the 1994

From a credit perspective, 1994 perpetuals rated lower than both the 1986 notes and

the 1994 notes, he added. However, Mr Seligman said the bargaining position of holders of the 1994 perpetuals had been strengthened by the threat

of legal action. These bondholders, led by Mr Stone, had issued a writ against Barings and some of its former directors.

Pundits braced for Taxpayers paying the penalty for Inland Revenue error interest rate hike

By Lea Paterson

THE CITY was yesterday steeling itself for further interest rate hikes following the publication of stronger-than-expected economic data.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) said the UK current account was in surplus by £116m in the last quarter of 1997 - economists had predicted the account would go into the red.

The better-than-expected current account figures were largely due to a £2.7bn surplus in investment income. The deficit in traded goods rose significantly - from £2.8bn to £4.2bn suggesting UK exporters are still being squeezed by the high pound.

Economists were also surprised by an upward revision to economic growth over the last quarter of the year.

The ONS said GDP grew by 0.6 per cent between October and December last year, an upward adjustment of 0.2 percentage points. GDP growth for the year as whole was revised downwards slightly from 3.2 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Dharshini David, economist at HSBC Markets, said: "The big surprise in these numbers [the GDP figures | was the upward revision to quarter-on-quarter GDP, largely reflecting upward revisions to the consumer expenditure component."

Anticipation of a forthcoming interest rate rise sent sterling rising against the mark. The pound closed up almost a pfennig at DM3.035, down from the day's high of DM3.05.

Kevin Darlington, economist at ABN Amro, said: "Upwardly revised consumer spending will favour the interest rate bawks". Minutes from the February

meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee - which sets UK interest rates - revealed the committee was split four against four on whether to raise rates. Only the decision by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, to use his casting vote for a rate freeze kept the cost of bortowing on hold at 7.25 per cent.

The City will now be anxiously waiting for January earnings data, due out next Wednesday along with February unemployment figures. Strong growth in pay could persuade the MPC to raise rates at its next meeting.

Charles Goodhart, one of the MPC hawks who voted to raise rates in February, said yesterday: "Half a per cent [year-on-year pay growth] is probably sustainable with the present inflation target but if it goes very much further, either in wages or earnings, then I think there would be severe difficulties in meeting the 25 per cent target".

By Andrew Verity

TENS OF THOUSANDS of taxpayers have been wrongly fined £100 each because of failures by the Inland Revenue in processing a rush of last-minute an returns, it emerged yesterday.

The Adjudicator's Office, which bandles complaints against the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise, said it had received calls from taxpayers, disgruntled that they had been fined despite returning forms on time.

Mike Savage, a spokesman for the Adjudicator's Office,

SHARES in Hornby, the mod-

el railway and Scalextric com-

pany soared 28 per cent

resterday amid stock market ru-

mours that the company may

face a takeover bid. The 57p

rise to 257.5p, a five-year high,

forced the company to make a

statement saying it was "not in

discussions with any party

about a takeover or sale of the

Homby shares were sus-

pended at 11.40am after the

early rise in the stock but trad-

said: "There is evidence that the penalty notices have been sent leading networks of tax agents. out saying You have to pay a Gerry Hart, head of Tax Team £100 penalty when in fact that and a former chairman of the return had been submitted.

"People have been worried said many agents had received about the penalty notices which penalty notices when clients had have been wrongly sent to tax agents. We think there are going to be some difficulties with the penalties being charged."

Those with a "reasonable excuse" - a definition which should include delays in the Revenue's computer system should succeed in having the fine removed because forms had

Hornby has had a chequered

past but has been improving

more recently. It has withdrawn

from the toy and radio control

market and has been concen-

trating more on its core trains

and Scaleatric businesses which

it is aiming more at adult en-

thusiasts rather than children.

In November it posted a

slight fall in profits to £973,000.

It has been cutting overheads

and improving its manufactur-

ing and sourcing operations. It

has enjoyed success with mod-

Hornby denies knowledge of a bid as

its shares steam ahead by 30 per cent

system is thought to have sent out the penalties automatically simply because forms had not been logged on to the system before fines were issued. The Revenue has slapped fines on

submitted forms on time.

Chartered Institute of Taxation.

The Revenue's computer

more than 670,000 taxpayers. Returns compiled using the been date-stamped on receipt. Revenue's software - rather

suburban commuter lines.

speedboat manufacturer and

expanded into the cut throat toy

market. The shares hit a low of

96p in 1995 but have since

been recovering under new

chairman Peter Newey. Sales of

its core trains and Scalextric

games and accessories have

been selling well.

The finding was backed by than a paper form - have lacked tion professionals yesterday the barcodes which allow them to be scanned directly into the Revenue's computer system, designed by the US computer giant EDS. Instead, all forms have to be input manually.

The Revenue yesterday admitted that some taxpayers had been sent penalties despite returning forms by the deadline of 31 January. But a spokeswoman said taxpayers could have the fines revoked if they appealed to the Revenue within 30 days of receiving a penal-

The country's leading taxa-

Adjudicator's Office on 0171

By Michael Harrison

ing started again in late after- el railway collectors by intro-WHEN Freepages, the telephone directory service, decidducing liveried ranges which include locomotives with the ed to change its brand name to Scoot, it didn't think anybody Virgin and GNER colours as well as the Eurostar trains and would be upset. But it reckoned without a firm of south coast residential letting agents. In the 1980s Hornby ran into the sidings when it acquired a

To Freepages, Scoot was a meaningless and inoffensive term that could be adopted in any country where people wanted to find out where the nearest plumber, bookshop or taxi

But to Michael Deacon of Allan & Bath in Bournemouth, Scoot meant something else altogether-an animal and bird re- Deacon. "It was as if he was pellent used to prevent cats, dogs, rabbits, hares, squirrels and

Name change scoots Freepages into court battle

urged the Revenue to show le-

niency with taxpayers in the light

dent of the Association of Tax-

ation Technicians said the

Revenue's system "got very

close to breakdown" last De-

cember and January over self-

assessment. The Chartered

Institute of Taxation said it

would be keeping a close eye on

the Revenue's working defini-

tion of a "reasonable excuse".

Taxpayers can contact The

Frank Collingwood, presi-

of its own mistakes.

Earlier this week an Oxfordshire County Court judge agreed with Mr Deacon and ordered Scoot to repay Alian & Bath a year's subscription fees and its out of pocket expenses, a sum totalling £2,750.

even from fouling the garden.

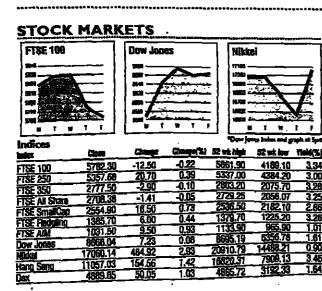
The clincher apparently came when Mr Deacon's side produced a box of the animal repellent in court whereupon it was nstantly recognised by the district judge. "The lawyer for Freepages took one look at it and his jaw sort of dropped," said Mr Bath.

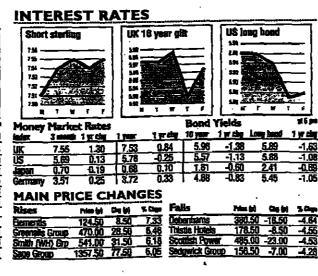
thinking to himself Beam me up Scottie' .

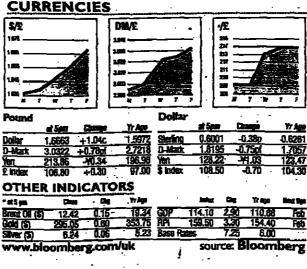
In its defence Freepages, which is now valued at £145m. maintained: "There is no difference between Freepages and Scoot apart from the name." The judge took a different

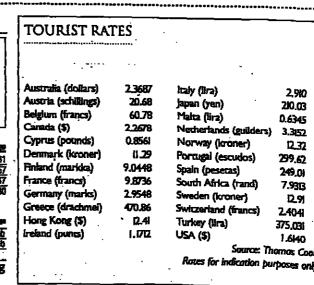
view ruling that the change of trading name "represented a fundamental breach of con-

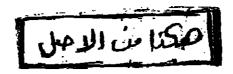
Freepages shrugged off its court defeat, saying it had 35,000 subscribers in the UK and had only received two complaints, including the one from Allan &













JEREMY WARNER ON THE INVESTMENT INSANITY FEEDING THE RISE IN THE SHARE PRICES OF BIG COMPANIES.

Watch out for the FTSE 100 investment bubble

Anyone who still swears by Schumacher's ue of Britain's top 100 companies source famous incantation - Small is Beautiful plainly hasn't been reading his business pages lately. The corporate and investment reality is that big is beautiful. The bigger

Let me explain. Most of us still have some attachment to the idea of small enterprise, with its self help attributes, capacity for innovation and powers of wealth creation. But the truth of the matter is that big is where the action and money lies. Size gives competitive advantage across a wide front, reinforcing the power of the large corporation and making it more and more difficult for smaller competitors to

Big companies tend to attract the best and smartest people, they have the low-est operating costs and lowest cost of capital. They have the best IT and management systems, and, if you believe the hype that surrounded Glaxo's at-tempt to merge with SmithKline Beecham, their greater market clout and R&D expenditure also gives them a better chance of product innovation.

Furthermore, they tend to command a premium in terms of stock market valuation and in recent years their share prices have generally outperformed those of smaller companies. On the face of it, there's no contest; big is simply better.

Just recently, the total stock market val-

through the one trillion pound mark for the first time. To be fair, this may not be as significant a milestone as it sounds. Because big companies like to merge one with another and takeover smaller ones, the FTSE 100 share index is bound to suck value into itself. When two Footsie stocks merge, as General Accident and Commercial Union are at the moment, it creates a vacancy which when filled increases the total value of the index accordingly.

Even so, the statistic is not entirely without meaning. Today, the FTSE 100 share index accounts for more than 76 per cent of the stock market's total value. When the index was launched 14 years ago to act as a benchmark for equity futures, the equivalent proportion was only 65 per cent. Put another way, the share of stock market value enjoyed by the next largest 800 companies has fallen from 35 per cent to 24 per cent. On valuation yardsticks too, big companies have significantly outperform their smaller brethren. The FTSE100 index has outperformed the mid cap index (consisting of the next largest 250 companies by market capitalisation) by 30 per cent over the last two years. The yield is lower on the FTSE 100 and the earnings multiple higher.

So what's my point? OK, so I could rail against the power of the corporate state, lament the way in which big business is sti-

protest about how big corporations are 30 years. starving smaller enterprise of capital, or generally get worked up about what a rum old business all this globalisation and consolidation really is. But actually the point I want to make is a comparatively narrow one. I want to examine the proposition that the big is beautiful phenomenon is helping to create a potentially dangerous investment bubble in the FTSE 100 share

I know this sounds a little alarmist, a bit over the top. But just listen to this. Caps, a research organisation which closely monitors investment patterns, this week published its annual survey of pension fund performance. It showed that the collective performance of the big four fund

management groups - Mercury, Schroders, PDFM and Gartmore - was 0.7 per cent less than the overall median for fund man-For UK equities, this median was itself

1.6 per centage points below the performance of the index, which last year returned 23.6 per cent. For overseas equities, the position was a good deal worse - a performance of only 6.1 per cent against an index return of 19. These figures may look insignificant, but if repeated over time the effect of this comparative under performance on your pension would be sizeable - in some circumstances perhaps as much

It is hardly surprising, then, that pension funds have begun to ask themselves why they are paying all that money for what looks to be pretty poor active fund management. Why not just stick the money in the safe haven of the index, in a basket of the world's leading companies, and watch it grow? There's growing evidence that this is precisely what they are doing. The market share of the big four for new business fell from well over a half in 1993 to 38 per cent last year. Much of this business has gone into index tracker

Moreover, there is plenty of official or semi official support for it. In a recent report on the high cost of personal pensions, John Bridgeman, director general of fair trading, pointed to the underperformance of active fund management and suggested the way forward was in low cost tracker funds. If the same policy stance is taken with the Government's proposed stakeholder pension, there will be an even larger wall of money flowing into the index.

The same follow my leader exercise is repeated within the index. Because banks and pharmaceuticals have sharply outperformed other stocks over the last year, those funds which aren't in these sectors are in trouble. If you are going to lose your job for being underweight in Barclays,

fling competition and consumer choice, as 40 per cent of retirement income after you make pretty sure you are not, regardless of any rational assessment of the stock market going forward.

All this is being compounded and exaggerated by the activities of hedge fund operators and the futures market. The hedge funds play off the fear among fund managers of indexation, buying up the stocks where the institutions are underweight and then squeezing the price higher. The need to "delta bedge" futures positions creates its own form of insanity. If stock prices go higher, the futures position must be underpinned with bigger purchases of physical stock, driving the narket higher still.

The big investment banks and securities houses are equally culpable. They all have their "global investment priority" hit lists, their "nifty one hundred and fifties", or whatever. Much of this activity takes place in a manner which is divorced from the fundamentals of investment judgment. Fund management is becoming dominated by the belief that big stocks only go up and woe betide you if you miss the elevator.

I'm not going to predict a stock market crash or anything as rash as that. Nonetheless, all previous investment bubbles have been dominated by large stocks too. There is an insanity in what's happening and the dangers of it are all too

Lonrho set to focus on its mining interests

By Michael Harrison

LONRHO yesterday took a major stride towards becoming a pure mining company after splashing out £344m to acquire a South African coal producer and unveiling plans to buy back 21 per cent of its shares.

The two deals mark the end of a tortuous series of threeway negotiations between Lon-South Africa's Anglo-American corporation and the mining company JCI and were broadly welcomed in the City. Lonrho said it expected the deals to increase earnings from next year onwards.

Once Lonrho completes the demerger of its African trading business and the sale of its Princess hotels chain, the group, founded by Tiny Rowland 40 years ago, will be pared down to a pure coal, platinum and gold mining busi-

TOL

Lonrho is buying the coal producer Tavistock from South Africa's JCI group for £167m and merging the business with its existing Duiker coal interests to create a combined group with 5 per cent of the internationally traded coal mar-

At the same time, JCI is swapping some of its gold and platinum interests for a 21 per cent shareholding in Lonrho owned by Anglo-American and then selling the stake on to Loncho for £177m. Anglo will be left with a 7.4 per cent stake. Lonrho is buying the shares for 106p each compared with a closing price yesterday of 99.5p

The Anglo shareholding originally belonged to Mr Rowland, who sold it to the German financier Dicter Bock, who in turn sold it to Anglo in 1996 as part of a strategy for Lonrbo to link up with the South African conglomerate.

Shareholders are expected to vote on the two deals at an

extraordinary meeting in April. This will allow time for the buyback to be completed before Lonhro demerges its African trading interests in May, removing an overhang of stock from the market.

Once the two deals are complete, Lonrho will be a group with sales of about £1bn, assets of £540m and borrowings of £470m. The sales of the Princess hotels chain is due to be completed by about June and is expected to raise at least \$500m (£300m).

Lonrho will then consist of a coal producer with annual sales of about 22 million tonnes, à platinum business with controlling interests in four mines in South Africa and a gold mining division whose principal asset is a 33 per cent stake in Ashanti Goldfields of

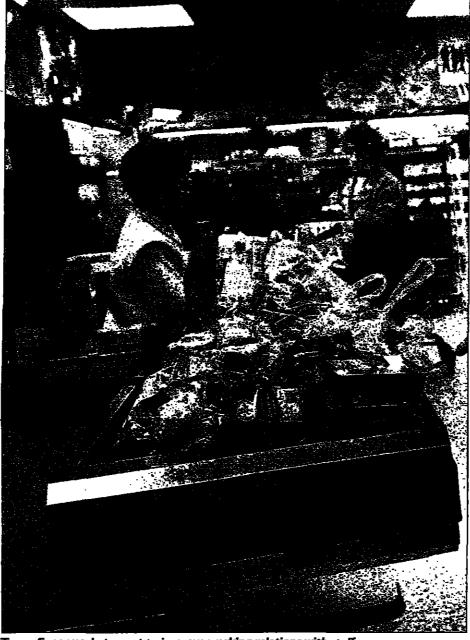
One mining analyst said: "The simple fact is that they are now managing to conclude deals which they said they would. It was imperative they did this before losing all credibility."

Nicholas Morrell, Lonrho's chief executive, said the overriding objective had been to remove the overhang of shares which had dogged the company for the last 18 months. He accepted that it had been a frustrating period for sharebolders - Lonrho's share price has more than halved to just over 100p in the last two years.

But he said the challenge of turning Lonrho from a collection of unrelated businesses into a focused mining company had been "pretty formida-

All the while, Mr Rowland, who still owns 3 million Lonrho shares, has been sniping

with everyone else," said Mr Morrell. "I hope he sees the merit of these transactions and supports the resolutions at



Tesco: Supermarkets want to improve working relations with staff

Tesco signals end to the 'us and them' syndrome

By Barrie Clement Labour Editor

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday hailed a new industrial relations agreement at Tesco as a prime example of how the "partnership" approach should work under New Labour.

The stores group, the biggest private sector employer of union members, unveiled a system for consulting staff and communicating with them as part of an attempt to break down the "us and them" culture.

The deal has been struck with Usdaw, the shopworkers' union with the help of Cranfield University, but it allows non-union members to

Michael Wemms, Tesco's retail director, said the involvement of Usdaw was critical to the whole process. "We believe that unionised companies can do better than nonunionised providing the structure is right," he said.

Ian McCartney, Trade and Industry Minister, said he was delighted that Tesco and Usdaw were strengthening their relationship, "It is a milestone for both parties. Employers working closely with their workforce is at the heart of a successful and competitive business."

an average circulation of

376,000, with a peak sale of

618,000 on Monday. In France.

L'Equipe sells 372,000 copies a

the Sporting Life, is believed to

be preparing to expand the rac-

ing newspaper into a general

expand First Sport, first pro-

Mr Young also has plans to

"We can't become a daily un-

til the market wants one," he

sports title later this year.

market.

Mirror Group, which owns

Dunloe wins battle for control of Ewart

DUNLOE House, the Dublin-based property company, has won the bid battle for Ewart, the Belfast property group. It said yesterday its takeover offer for the company has been declared unconditional by the Takeover Panel. The offer was declared unconditional after Ewart withdrew an appeal to the panel, in which it had challenged Dunloe's earlier claim to have won control of the company. After Ewart rejected two offers, Dunloe was forced to increase its bid when Moyne Shelf Company – a firm set up by Belfast businessmen – emerged as a white knight bidder in late February.

Heineken's liquid assets

HEINEKEN, the Dutch drinks giant, yesterday said the group had 1.9bn guilders (£560m) in liquid assets in its "war chest" for acquisitions and could attract extra money. Heineken's expansion policy prioritises countries where it already has a presence, to strengthen its existing positions, the company's chairman, Karel Vuursteen, said. Heineken reported a 16 per cent rise in 1997 net profit to £761m and announced it would dilute its shares with a bonus issue and a five-for-one split.

Bank acts over deposits

THE Bank of England has obtained injunctions against three individuals suspected of illegally taking bank deposits. The three are Balakrishnan Menon, Seymour Maitland-Kraft and Robin Leslie Peters, all based in the London area. The three men are understood to have been trading under the names Queensborough Investments Limited and OB Investments (UK) Limited both in the Isle of Man and on the UK mainland. The Bank of England's investigation is ongoing, and it is appealing to the public to come forward with information.

FirstGroup's bus venture

FIRSTGROUP, the transport operator, has formed an alliance with Hong Kong's New World Development Company to bid for the franchise to operate bus services in Britain's former island colony. The new venture will be called New World First Holdings and would bid to operate Hong Kong's China Motor Bus franchise after it expires in August, 1998. The venture, 26 per cent owned by FirstGroup, would compete with five others who have responded to a government tender to run 88 bus routes on the island. Stagecoach, the Perth-based transport group has also bid jointly with the China Motor Bus Co.

Media Business in bid talks

MEDIA Business Group has been approached about a possible bid for the company. "The company has been approached to engage in preliminary discussions which may or may not lead to an offer for the whole of the issued share capital of the company," Media Business said in a brief statement, adding that it would keep shareholders informed of developments. The company did not give further details. The company's shares shot up 34 per cent on the news, rising 30.5p to 132p by the close of trading.

COMPANY RESULTS							
	Turnover £	Pre-tax ∠	EPS	Dividend			
Fishers Intel (F)	40.4m (36 7m)	3.0m (1.9m)	1.9p (1.4p)	D 65p (0.5p)			
Ytte: Group (f)	144.6m (148.5m)	37.8m (52.6m)	53.4p (88 Op)	14.0p (12 16p)			
Thousas Whator (i)	1.89m (1.97m)	-0.107m (40.0m)	-1.44p (0.48p)				
Whitshurok (F)	41 05m (47 7m)	<u>_</u>	5.5p (28.91p)				
(F) - Final (2) - Interiro	† EPS in pro-incep	Bootels "Dividend to	be paid as a Fit	,			

Sunday newspaper kicks off sporting week

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE FIRST edition of a newspaper devoted entirely to sports will hit the newsstands tomorrow. Called Sport First, the paper will be a 48-page broadsheet which is hoping to cash in

readers for sports coverage. The paper is aimed at the "serious" sports fan although it will have the liveliness of a tabloid.

Keith Young, the entreprefrom the sidelines. "He is a shareholder along neur who has funded the venture with more than £1.5m of his own money, said the paper was aimed at readers of the Sunday broadsheets who want more sports coverage. Priced at 50p, it is designed to be a secondary purchase for Sunday newspaper readers.

Mr Young's is aiming for a circulation of 150,000, and the paper needs to sell 100,000 sales a week to break even. Mr Young regards this as a modest target. on the apparently insatiable You've got 17 million newspapers produced in this country demand among newspaper every day," he says. "I'm trying to expand the market by 0.9 per

> The venture is a slimmeddown version of Mr Young's original idea, which was to launch a daily sports paper. However, he struggled to find funding for the idea and eventually settled for a more modest Sunday format.

The paper will have a core editorial staff of about 20, but will rely heavily on stringers and freelancers to supply match reports. It will be divided into two 24-page sections, with the secand segment devoted entirely to football. It will also focus heavily on statistics, offering a comprehensive results service for

leagues. The success of BSkyB has shown that British consumers are willing to pay heavily for access to sport, especially football. However, no pure sports paper has ever succeeded.

even minor regional football

The format works well in other European countries, though. Italy's Gazzetta dello Sport has

ducing extra issues on Saturday and Monday, before moving to a seven-day operation. However, he says the decision to expand will be driven by the

"Michael Pateman trading as Keats Asso-

plete control of these accounts, and they were opened with the sole purpose "to steal money from Maindec and Computer Sales Agency (Waverley) Ltd and thereafter to

1988 and January 1997 £5.23 million was paid into the Jersey accounts by Mr Pateman. All of that money represented money stolen either from Maindec or Waverley." Mr Pateman also withdrew money in cash and from the Maindec dollar account.

"Mr Pateman concealed his thefts by destroying Maindec accounting records and by means of numerous false accounting en-

tries which he caused to be made in Maindec's books," the writ says. Maindec is claiming that Lloyds allowed

these withdrawals without lawful authori-

ty, and that Lloyds and Ladbrokes "have become involved in the aforesaid wrongdoing of Mr Pateman." Maindec is demanding the return of all

funds unlawfully withdrawn by Mr Pateman. Bernie Ecclestone's racing business For-

mula One Administration is being sued for around US\$200,000 in lost advertising revenue by MTV s.a.L., a French language TV station based in Beirut. MTV sall, which is owned by Murr Tele-

vision, has no connection with the better known pop video TV channel, MTV.

MTV s.a.l. claims it signed a contract on 2 March 1998 to broadcast all the Formula One Grand Prix car races of 1998 in the Lebanon in the French language. The Beirut station then started signing contracts

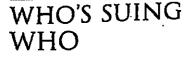
with its own sponsors and advertisers. The day after the contract was signed. Formula One Administration cancelled the contract, saying that it had already granted exclusive broadcasting rights for the races

to another company. MTV s.a.l. has lodged a writ in the High Court in London against Mr Ecclestone's company, claiming "damages for breach of contract, negligent misrepresentation, negligent misstatement and for malicious falsehood." It is understood that MTV s.a.l. is claiming damages equal to its forecast advertising earnings for the 1998 season, which would have been around US\$200,000.

Lastly, I must mention Mattel of the US. the maker of the Barbie and Ken dolls, which is suing the British men's magazine FHM over photos of the dolls which the mag ran recently to illustrate an article on

The pictures showed the children's toys engaged in "improper, sexually explicit and offensive positions," according to Mattel.

The company filed a law suit in Los Angeles in order, it said, to protect Barbie from being "associated with anything obscene, vul-



IOHN WILLCOCK



A Buckinghamshire-based engineering company is suing Lloyds Bank and Ladbrokes for the return of over £5 million which it claims the company's own finance director stole from his employers over an eight year period, by forging signatures on hundreds of cheques.

The writ issued this week by Maindec Computer Engineering of Wooburn Green, Bucks, says that Alan Pateman, a senior accountant with the company, spent large amounts of the money to fund his taste for betting.

The writ claims that Mr Pateman forged 30 cheques to Ladbroke Racing worth £129,000, and over 130 cheques totalling £280,500 to Ladbrokes Limited, in 1994-96

Mr Pateman was employed as group accountant by Maindec from about 1984 to 23 September 1996. For the last five years with the company Mr Pateman was Finance

Maindec alleges that: "Since about 1988

until his resignation Mr Pateman repeatedly forged the signature of Roger Timms (a Maindec director) on a substantial number of cheques and payment instructions drawn on the said bank accounts of the Plaintiff companies, and without lawful authority abstracted funds in an amount exceeding £5

The writ goes on to say: "Mr Pateman also dishonestly made out cheques from Maindec's bank accounts to persons connected with him, again by repeatedly forging Mr Timms' signature on cheques."

"From at least March 1994 he made out payments in a total amount exceeding £150,000 inter alios to his wife (Bronwyn Pateman), bookmaker (I Morris Ltd) and another bookmaker (R. Bazell) as well as various other parties."

The saga appears to have started in January 1988 when Mr Pateman opened bank accounts with the Jersey Branch of National Westminster Bank in the name of "Michael Pateman trading as Parnell & Kass" and Maindec says that Mr Pateman had com-

conceal these monies." The writ continues: "Between January

the writ claims, allegedly over US\$45,000 between 1994-96.

Takeover bid talk boosts C&W as gossips dial in

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

into Cable; Orange contin- strike. ued to enjoy Thursday's upbeat trading statement and cent shareholding.

Cable shares climbed 25p to 700, a closing peak, in brisk trated by Lazard Frères, the merchant bank, was behind The telecoms group was

Continental interests; Deutsche Telekom and tandem, were identified as afternoon it was off 36.7. the most likely predators.

one time, seemed likely to be attract a bid it could prompt 2,554.9. to another record-breaking BT, still seeking a deal after Takeover gossips dialled got away, to mount a counter

Orange, up 21p at 381p, felt the warmth of analytical British Aerospace's 21.1 per stake, which logic would suggest must be shortly on the move, was an important influence. It is a peripheral trading. Optimistic talk of an interest of BAe and a tanveritable network of communication groups.

Colt Telecom, a takequer candidate for much of its 23p to 675p. The internasaid to be in the sights of short-quoted life, jumped 72.5p to 1,502.5p. At one time Footsie was

closing down 12.5 at 5,782.3. believed to have held talks discomfort of their peers. US information company.

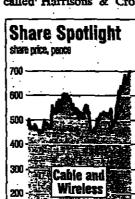
TELECOM groups Cable with a number of overseas The mid cap index gained and Wireless and Orange group and on at least one oc 20.7 to a 5,357.6 peak and the survived a blue-chip somer- casion got round the negoti- small cap indicator also went sault which killed what, at ating with BT. If Cable did to a new high, up 18.5 to

British Airway's fell 25.5p the American MCI group to 574p after confirming it was considering a proposal from National Express for a joint bid to run the Eurostar rail service. NE advanced renewed speculation about upgrades. But that BAe 6.5p to 781.5p. Its year's results are due next week; around £81m is expected, up from £63.9m. Railtrack was another on the right line, up 31p to 971p on its 800p a share offer orches- talising attraction to a possible channel rail link involvement.

Ahead of next week's maiden results Diageo fell tional spirits giant held what was regarded as a cautious investment presentation in France Telecom, operating in up 46.4 points. By mid- New York on Thursday. Great Universal Stores shaded 11.5p to 773.5p after an Rumours have often Supporting indices, once \$831m bid for the shares it swirled around Cable. It is again, blissfully ignored the did not own in Metromail, a

BAe and Rolls-Royce field, led the small cap climbed on the lifting of the ceilings on foreign owned shares to 49.5 per cent. Rolls scored the biggest percentage gain, up 6.5p to 275p; BAe

rose 16p to 1,951p. Elementis, the chemical group which used to be called Harrisons & Cros-



MAMJJASONDJFM

progress, improving 8.5p to 124.5p. The pub chain Greenalls stirred 28.5p higher to 470p and WH Smith, for so long in the doldrums, rose business. A 6 per cent stake 31.5p to 541p, highest for changed bands recently. more than five years.

the undercards. Media Busi- 14.25p in a remarkable 27.1 ness gained 30.5p to 132p af-million turnover; it conter saying it was in talks firmed a deal to produce a which could lead to a bid; new game for the Sony London & Metropolitan, a Playstation. property group, gained 2.5p to 12.25p as Grantchester appeared with an £6.3m

agreed share exchange offer. The toy maker Hornby was suspended for much of Trading resumed at 257.5p, company said it was not to damage the shares, off a talking "with any party" further 1.5p to 68.5p. about a takeover or sale. 300p-a-share offer.

group, edged ahead 2.5p to 95p after it disclosed talks were on which could lead to bids for all or parts of the

Rage, the computer Bid action was evident on games group, rose 3.25p to

> Limit, the, the Lloyd's insurance group, held at 178.5p after a George Soros trust said it had sold 5.6 mil-

lion shares at 179p. Worries about British the session after climbing Biotech, following Thurs-82p to 282.5p at one time. day's suspension of Dr Andrew Millar, director of up 57p on the day when the clinical research, continued

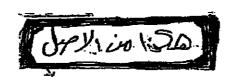
Verity, with a wafer thin There were early sugges- sound system jumped 7.25p tions that large investors to a 86.5p peak on hopes of had been approached with a more licensing agreements are about to be clinched.

takeover candidate, firmed to 12p as stories strengthened it could be the vehicle for the return of Michael Ashcroft, a controversial businessman who petted £154m when his ADT security group was taken over. Dev Pritchard, founder of the Takare nursing homes chain, is said to be prepared to sell his 29 per Carlisle cent stake. Mr Ashcroft could be working with Tony Berry, ex-Blue Arrow, to reverse a recruitment business into Carlisle where entrepreneur Nigel Wray is chairman.

Intriguing developments at Farlake, the fund manager which has attracted two new shareholders. With EMS Capital sitting on 25.47 per cent and Derwent, thought to be related to Monaco-based David Rowland, on 14.89 per cent, the Eaglet small company invest-ment trust disclosed it had lifted its interest to 27.12 per cent. There is talk Derwent wants to go 29 per cent. Farlake, with £2m cash, is capitalised at £6m at 255p.

	L	believed to have held ta	dks discomfort of their peers	. US information company.	#AMJJASURUJEM	300p-a-share offer.	are about to be clinched.	£6m at 255p.	ړ ل
	High Low Stock Price Chy YM MECode H	E wask Igh Law Stock Price Cby Yid PRECo 107 257 Resize Co 2000s - 0.50 2.4 2.2 10 10 287 Hearthur Gy 30530 - 12 20.2 2 10 287 Hearthur Gy 30530 - 12 732 20 10 287 Hearthur Gy 30530 - 10 73 82 40	777 787 87 See China China 2020 - 48 HB	20 6 Rent Age Wes 8250 +0.25	76-47 Schroder Japan 56-57 +2-75 775	7 37 ff tecepts 21.50 _ 23.5 5 408 369 bedydyn News 347.55 _ 2029.0	g Prices are in stering except where stated.) 250 Idend as a percentage of the share price. Th	The yield is the latest twelve monder declared gross one proceduratings (P/E) rado is the shareprice	*) *
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The lesson from the underclass



Place: Oxford

On the estate nicknamed 'the city' of screaming tyres' because of its teenage joyriders, the residents could teach Gordon Brown a lesson in social investment

IT'S A dangerous thing, irony. I was unkempt. The gardens were under in the act of transferring money to control and the cherry trees and winmy pocket to leave my wallet safely inside the house." I think you'll be all right carrying money through the streets. Daylight mugging isn't that common here," said Jim Hewitt (of whom more shortly). I looked at him and realised he was gently pulling

I was disposed to believe the worst. As I parked my car I noted the ominous broken glass by the city - the nearby Cowley car works roadside. This may have been Oxford, the city of the dreaming spires, but I was on the peripheral housing estate of Blackbird Leys, which was lessness is particularly high among dubbed the city of the screaming tyres when it briefly became the Brands Hatch of teenage car thieves at the beginning of the decade. is a community worker employed by (There are traffic calming humps everywhere now.)

In fact the glass fragments by my ancient Volvo were not the product of some delinquent radio-snatcher but the aftermath of a visit by an Oxford City Council van which had 68-year-old who meets him at the backed into the front of a car belonging to a local resident.

Blackbird Leys, despite its splendidly bucolic name, is one of the "20 most deprived parts of the country" which Gordon Brown is supposed to lottery she wouldn't move. Even at be targeting in the budget next week as part of New Labour's New Deal drive against poverty. It did not appear so in the early spring sunshine. If the 30-year-old houses were not exactly neat they were far from

ter jasmine were in blossom. Most of the cars were considerably less antique than mine, and all but one had wheels and tyres.

The social indicators tell their own story. A majority of the households here rely on benefit. One in 10 of the 14,000 population are single mothers. Unemployment is almost double that of the rest of the now cover less than a quarter of the site occupied when the British motor industry was at its peak. Jobthe young. And yet the local people don't seem to feel deprived.

The aforesaid Jim Hewitt, who the ecumenical church at the centre of the estate, seems quite happy to walk through the streets carrying the funds of the estate's selfhelp savings fund.

Mrs Jean Harwood, a sprightly community centre to put a few pence into her account (she's saving for three or four days bed and breakfast at Eastbourne or Newquay) says that if she won the night Sue Mollington is happy to walk home in the dark without fear when the estate's Spotlight Theatre School session is over.

Yes, Blackbird Leys has its problems. Its shopping, transport and



Stretching their wings: playworker and kids at the Dovecote After School club on the Blackbird Leys estate

return bus ride away. The new extension of 1,000 homes has no shops at all. The sight of women struggling on long walks carrying the week's shopping in bulging carrier bags is common

But the spirit of enterprise among the people we are now told to call the underclass is uplifting. Gordon Brown's plans for more cash for such estates comes after a Whitehall analysis showing that, although huge amounts of public money are consumed there, most of it is passive spending such as benefit payments. The Chancellor spending there towards creating on into employment. work opportunities and improving

quate. The nearest bank is an 80p how, he could do worse than take After School club, is, at the age of gle mothers in their late teens and a tour of the self-help initiatives of Blackbird Leys.

It is not just the credit union, which now has 200 adult, and as many children, savers. (It also lends to members at just under 13 per cent, compared with the 35-50 per cent which finance companies offer on the estate, and the 200 per cent of the loan sharks).

There are, in addition, afterschool playschemes, parent and toddier groups, family centres, parenting courses and much else. As well as providing services such activities build the skills and confidence now wants to tilt the balance of of local people so that they can go

32, about to take up a job at a supermarket off the estate. "I have discovered skills here I didn't know I had - managing bank accounts, paying wages, authorising spending for equipment, organising events and

coaches for trips." It is the same at the credit union. "We thought we were too thick to be on a committee," said the assistant secretary Liz Seeney, "but now here we are using a computer."

Jim Hewitt has so far trained two treasurers who have gone on to get related jobs, one with the local health authority, the other in computer work.

in one of the houses on the isolat-

health facilities are grossly inade- education and training. To find out who is a key figure in the Dovecote ed new estate I met a group of sinjumbled as the pile of toys in the a dozen toddlers played. (The estate's toy library costs 50p per toy

per week.) The talk was of straightening never listen to what they say, of what they will do when the government cuts benefits to force of the £120 a week fees at the pri-

Without the group they we live lives of isolation. "By getting together they have taken the first step toward helping themselves," says Jim Hewitt, who sees the solution to the estate's problems in striking the right balance between proper parenting and economic productivity.

Grants from Gordon Brown on Tuesday to multiply and develop such initiatives would be welcome "but short-term initiatives which expect results by the end of the year or by the next election won't work. You can't change a mindset on welfare in five years. We need a strategic approach on many fronts childcare, welfare, drug abuse, crime. New money needs to be long-term, and you have to consult people at the grassroots more to get the ownership of ordinary people. It's a long job."

Hewitt should know. He has been working and living there for 18 years. At one of the estate's schools, Wesley Green, the deputy head Daphne James came to a similar realisation.

"If I'm going to tell the children it is OK to come from here, then I have to live here too," she says.

Boosting the self-esteem of her pupils is the real answer she feels. Groups like the Spotlight Theatre School do it for some of them; its tap and ballet-dancing pupils successfully audition for shows at the London Palladium and a group performed with Cliff Richard and Vers Lynn in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace for the VE Day anniversary recently.

But Miss James is targeting all early 20s who get together twice a her kids. She has developed a proweek. Their conversation was as gramme for the school which she calls Eagle Potential. A group of middle of the room with which half lively 12-year-olds talked me through their workbooks with genume enthusiasm for its sleepovers at school, home-made Outward Bound activities and work with old hair by blow-drying, of how GPs people. Most interesting perhaps. was the self and group assessments she has built in.

"We found that other people them out to work, of absent fathers, think we're capable of more than we thought ourselves," said a boy vate nursery nearby, of how you eke called Daniel, wide-eyed as if he was out £87.90 a week to cover gas, electric, water, insurance, TV licence, makes you feel good". Talking to At another group. Lemon Juice, phone, clothin food, napples and from paid his classmates made me tone of the houses on the isolat- neething gel.

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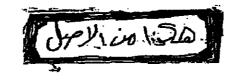
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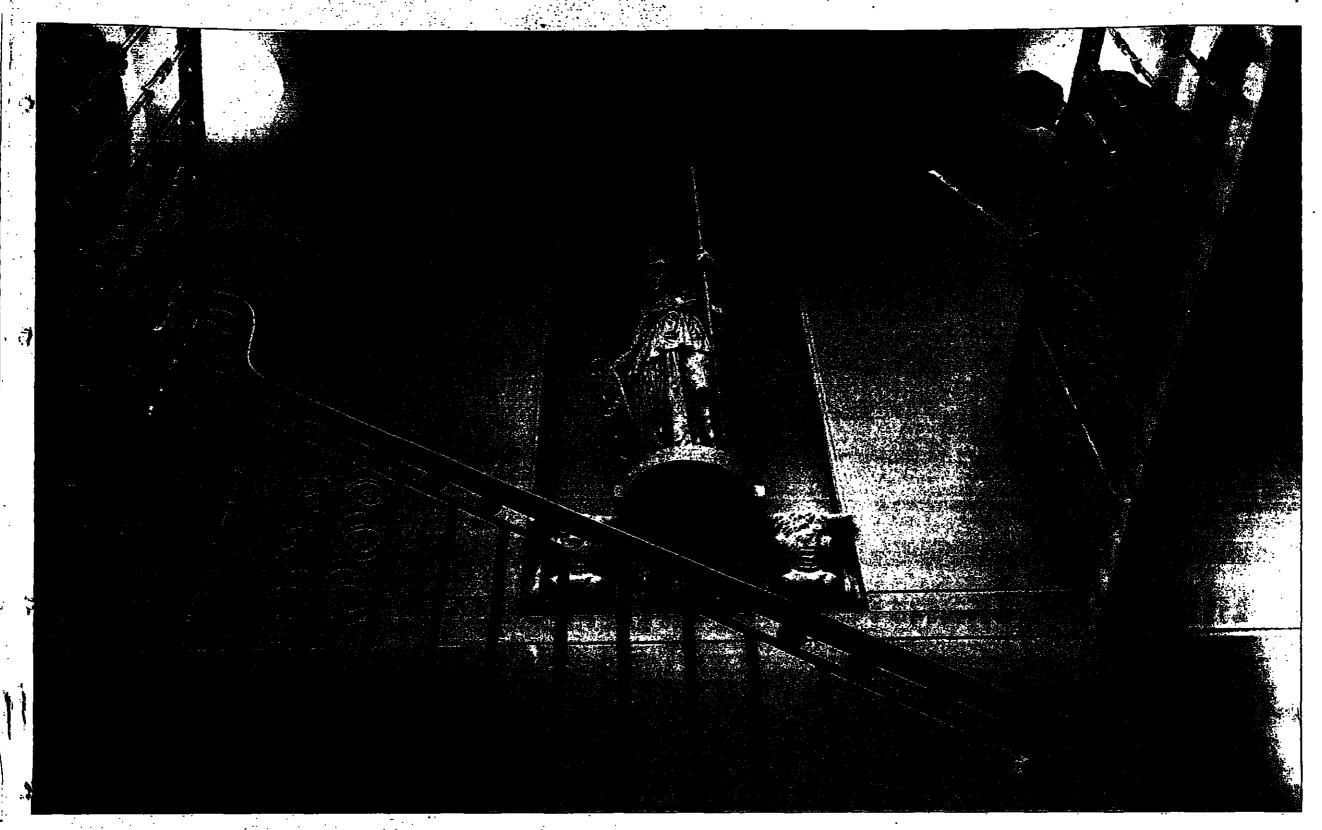
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INE OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT



Reap where you have Soane

A man in a pink tailcoat opens the door to me. A quick probe in my bag, and I'm allowed into the room with all the gold. There it is, in great fat slabs like rich boys' toffee. A neat, round hole in the thick glass of a display case allows me to poke a forefinger in and touch the fat, buttery surface of £70,000. My damp fingerprint fades reluctantly.

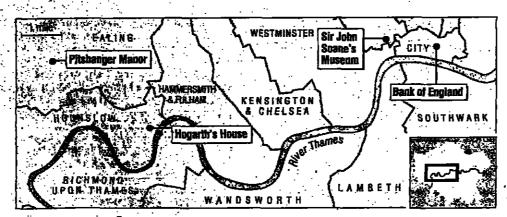
They are rather keen on gold at the Bank of England. In their museum they have Roman ingots, twined like barley-sugar twists, and Japanese bullion crafted into yin and yang bars - perhaps in an effort to balance more than the books. But I'm not here for the money. Pve come to this great windowless monument to cash to satisfy my curiosity about its architect, Sir John Soane, who, from 1788, spent 45 years of his life on the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street. For him the building became "the pride and boast of my life".

He had other prides and boasts. There is his other great creation, the Dulwich picture gallery, and his two houses, the London home in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the "country" villa, now subsumed into suburban Ealing. And there were other friends and connections, which I was to string together into a leisurely, Soane-themed amble half-way across London.

I wandered first through Soane's Bank Stock Office, a high, coolly elegant, aval-shaped hall with curving mahogany counters around the walks. It's not exactly as Soane had it built in the late 18th century. They knocked the lot down in the Twenties when the bank site was redeveloped, but had the decency to rebuild this room in cract accordance with the original plans.

There is a little more Soane to see in the other main room of the museum, the Thirties rotunds with, in the centre of the room, a display case of gold ingots piled up like profiteroles, or Ferrero Rocher chocolates.

From the Bank of England and Dulwich's picture gallery to a villa tucked away in the suburbs of Ealing, John Soane left London a rich heritage. Andy Bull sets out on the trail of the architect, collector and genius



Around the room are draped female figures, caryatids, that help to support the domed, glazed roof. These are Soane originals, rescued from the demolition. They look as though they have a

weight on their minds. My second Soane spot is just four stops away on the Central Line, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where be bought three adjacent houses in the tall, grey-brick errace, and spent several decades creating a unique family home in which to house his remarkable collection of artefacts. It's a house of incredible richness, from the Pompeian red of the dining-room and library, to the sunshine yellow of the first-floor draw-

ing-rooms. Soane created a magical illusion of space by placing mirrors behind exhibits, above bookcases and in recesses, and then he packed every nook and cranny with books, paintings and his vast collection

of architectural fragments. With the ingenious use of great, hinged panels, a room the size of a lift becomes a picture gallery in which the works of art are fanned as if on the pages of a giant book. And what works. Hogarth's The Rake's Progress is here—the tale of a young man's fall, from inheritance to madbouse, in eight canvases. In another tiny room are no fewer than three Canalettos.

died prematurely Soane described it as "the Mansion of woe". He had hoped to fund a dynasty of architects, but neither of his sons - George and John - was interested. The dissolute George, indeed, ridiculed his father's architecture in two spiteful newspaper articles. Soane believed these were the "death blows" that killed his wife. The sons scowl from a portrait in the first-floor drawing-room, looking not unlike the Rake in the series of paintings downstairs.

My Soane-inspired route west took me close to Hogarth's country house, and I got off the Tube at Turnham Green to make a detour. If you have ever driven into London along the A4, and negotiated that landmark of automotive misery, the Hogarth Roundabout, you will have passed the house. When Hogarth bought it in 1749, it was to provide a place of retreat from London for his last 15 summers. Today, despite the fact that four lanes of traffic blare past its door, a high wall ensures that the garden, dominated by a 400-year-old mulberry tree, is still an oasis of calm.

Once, Soane's own country house was just a few fields away. Today it is a grind out through the suburbs. Soane bought Pitshanger Manor in 1800 and turned into his vision of a Regency villa, enhancing its yellow brick façade with four towering columns topped by caryatids, rather like the ones holding up the roof of the Bank of England. Except that, here, they had nothing but sky above them.

Pitshanger Manor has had its ups and downs. The grounds are now Walpole Park, and until the Eighties the house was the town library. But half a dozen rooms have been beautifully recreated, often with reference to watercolours showing original furnishings dating from 1802.

The other imposing thing about the place is the This wasn't always a happy house. After his wife arched gateway. I'd seen it dozens of times, long be-

A sense of space: John Soane bought Pitshanger Manor, Ealing, in 1800 and turned it into his vision of a Regency villa Photographs: John Voos

fore I'd heard about John Soane. And the reason for that is a little further down the green, in a Thirties building that bears the name Ealing Studios. This was home not just to the Ealing Comedies of the Thirties, Forties and Fifties, but also to much of the BBC's drama and comedy, including Steptoe and Son and Monty Python. Indeed, it still is. And, down the decades, if ever a director has wanted an imposing gateway to film a Rolls Royce purring through, they have popped next door, to this place.

The studios are only infrequently open to the public, but across the green is a pub, the Red Lion, which has always been the local for cast and crew. I finished my journey here, casting an eye over the photographs on the walls. There was Jack Hawkins, looking terribly British in naval uniform, Gina Bellman pouting in Dennis Potter's Blackeyes, and old man Steptoe, Wilfrid Brambell, leering away. And I noticed that he had a look in his eye rather like that of the Rake, and of Soane's dissolute son. What a trio. As George probably never said, but as Harold Steptoe might have: "Fah-vah, do try to behave properly."

Bank of England Museum, Threadneedle Street, open Mon-Fri 10am-Spm, adm free. Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, open Tue-Sat 10am-Spm; first Tuesday each month, 6pm-9pm, adm free. Hogarth's House, Great West Road, open Tues-Fri, 1pm-5pm, Sat and Sun 1-6pm. adm free. Pitshanger Manor, Mattock Lane, Ealing, open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, adm free.

INSIDE USA

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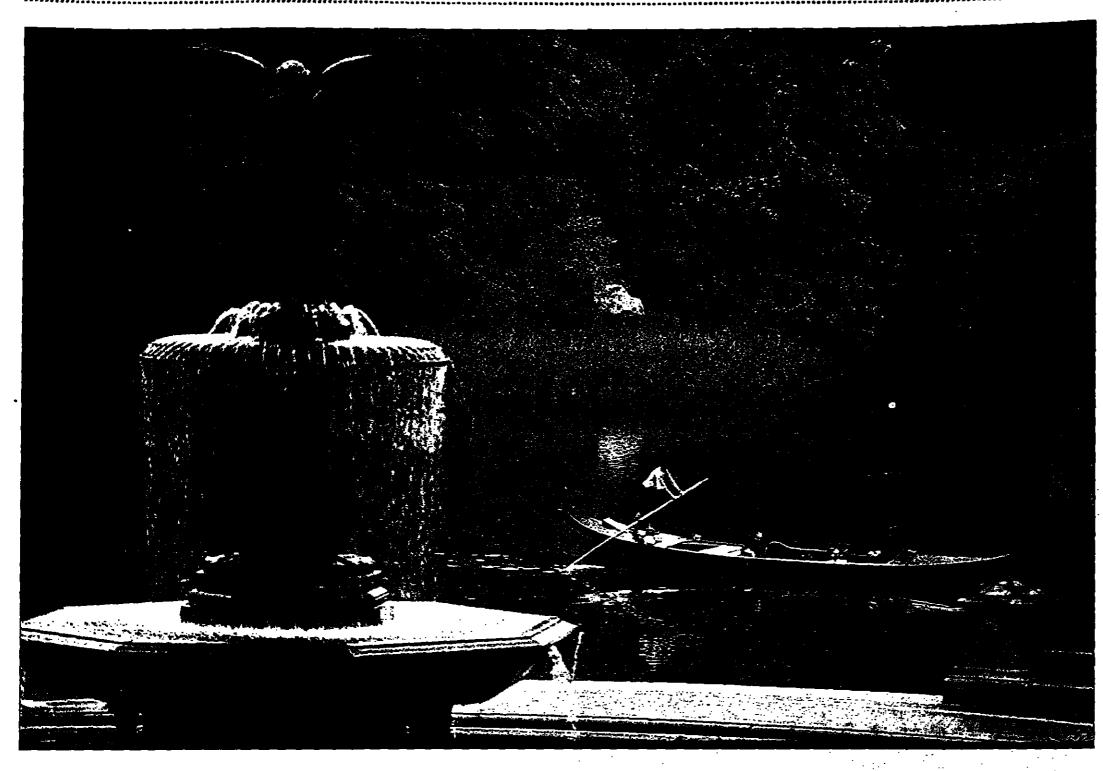
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Manhattan transfers in soft focus

monopoly on romance, but now that air fares across the Atlantic are at their lowest ever, how about New York for the ultimate hearthrob? Adam Shaw is convinced he made the right choice

New York: Woody Allen adores it, Quentin Crisp is devoted to it, Damon Runyon immortalised it and Frank Sinatra named it twice. Here you can fall in love, become romantically attached to a Bloomingdales charge card, and take moonlit horse-drawn rides through Central Park.

Woody Allen tells this joke: "And, uh, tsch. I was depressed. I was ... in analysis, I. uh, was suicidal; as a matter of fact, uh, I would have killed myself, but I was in analysis with a strict Freudian and if you kill yourself ... they make you pay for the sessions you miss." Well that's typical New York: manic, comic and ironic.

So it seemed appropriate that trying to arrange a surprise romantic holiday in New York for myself and my girlfriend turned out to be fairly manic and comic itself. First, there was my concern that Nicolette might be arranging a surprise herself, and that on the appointed day I would serve her breakfast in bed with two tickets to New York beside doorman downstairs. Despite the city's

There was also the purely practical problem of trying to arrange the trip through travel agents who were told that under no circumstances were they to return my calls, lest. Guernsey, yet in that small space it crams the girlfriend answer. So I had a series of in more than 30 major museums, hundreds rushed and hushed telephone conversations of restaurants, 43 theatres, scores of comfrom upstairs, to agents who thought I had

On the day of the surprise itself, I compiled a cryptic crossword puzzle that she - there is a fair amount of competition for would have to solve before discovering the best events. Fortunately, from London price Broadway ticket and £100 if you buy what the present was or where it was hidden. But she's no good at solving crosswords and, truth be told, I'm not much good at designing them, so in the end I just had to tell her where we were going.

There's no shortage of hotels in Manhattan, but I wanted to avoid the chains and go for something more individual. The Plaza and Waldorf hotels are great but expensive; the Paramount and Royalton are very different from the norm, but were full, so I decided to rent an apartment from a friend. Thirty floors up, two streets away from Times Square, the apartment offered a view of the Empire State and Chrysler buildings and the Hudson river. So we spent our first night in New York nursing jet lag, curled up in front of the stunning view, eating Chinese takeaway from those white boxes you see in

Hollywood movies. Having our own apartment, we were able to pretend to be New Yorkers for a week, jogging down to the corner to buy bagels for breakfast, picking up the papers from the doormat and becoming best friends with the

world: she watching the New York Giants whose problems are turned to advantage while I was watching the African hippos. eg a heating system that is so archaic that cracks let escaping steam form romantic

white clouds rising above the streets. Manhattan is roughly the size of edy venues and more bars and night clubs than it's possible to count. With a catchment area of millions - on Manhattan Island alone

New York weekends: the fast facts

New York weekends: the even faster facts

few pounds more.

nights in a Manhattan hotel.

inevitably goes up - but only by 🖾 .

European cities have had the the marmalade, only to find two tickets to brashness, we were amazed at how polite. I had already booked tickets to Bring in Da. Quiet at the heart of the storm: Botswana resting on my pillow. We might everyone was. Potholes may scar the streets. Noise, Bring in Da Funk. This is no ordinary then have been on opposite sides of the but you can't help looking kindly on a place top-hat-and-tails tap show; it's what they call Central Park hoofing - the bad boy generation meets Gene Kelly in an amazing dance show about the history of black rhythm music.

Our first serious mission was to book ourselves up for the remaining evenings. New it through an agent. You can get theatre list-York, we reasoned, is home to Broadway, and Broadway is home to the musical. The - though at a price.

You can expect to pay £60-£70 for a top-

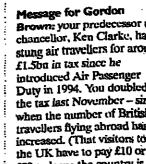
New York's Bethesda fountain, Photograph: Hose Azel/Aurora

in the the New Yor Time Out magazine, put the you don't hottest ticket in town is Chicago - in fact, if in miner in early for a few hours, and aren't turned out to be too hot for us to find any the characteristic booth particular show you tickets. There were plenty of other choices see, in or is a half-price ticket booth in Times Square for tickets sold on the day of the performance.

Apart from the big-name musicals there's Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway, and gem of a show. Stumbling out of a cellar bar, laden with shopping, we came across Tubes by the Blue Man Group - musical meets performance art. At the end of the show we and the rest of the audience were wrapped together in toilet paper while still sitting in our seats - which at least ensures a close - if not

altogether romantic - end to the evening. If being bound in Andrex doesn't suit you. there's the more laid-back charm of the Village, where we listened to soulful jazz at Sweet Basil, wandered round small shops buving hand-made cards, and drank coffee in small corner cafes. And, for a bit of handson experience, we visited Our Name Is Mud - a pottery shop where in addition to selling professionally made pots they allow you to make your own clay souvenir of a New York surprise.

Adam Shaw is a presenter of BBC2's Working Lunch'. He has just published a book with Lorraine Chase, called 'Money and How to Make More of It'.



We outbound travellers' must appear so soft a touch tempted to add yet more to the cost of air travel in place on St Patrick's Day, you may not stop short of increasing taxes to Ireland may I suggest a compromise,

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The airlines are squealing about added costs, and no doubt fear that the concept will spread. But people who use charter flights need not fear increased fares: these are usually operated completely full, as we who have endured the 27-hour Melbourne to Manchester charter operated by Austravel know all too

From France comes news of another tempting tax: on holiday brochures. Fed up

for 10,000 dong (about £4) for domestic flights - though judging by the list of exceptions you'd be unlucky to end up paying. Neil Taylor of Regent Holidays in Bristol found himself booking a client on a domestic flight from Danang, when the reservations computer came

leaders and accompanying persons, official guests of the Vietnam Government and Communist Party of Vietnam, officials and employees of embassies, consulates and United Nations agencies in Vietnam.*

continues: "Vietnam's hero mothers, war invalids of Vietnam's army with blindness, without arms/ legs or more serious disabilities, stretcher and wheelchair passengers, infants and children under transit passengers and cabi crew on duty.

GREEN CHANNEL:

Leaving the car behind

This week the Today programme reported the astounding discovery that, if you restrict road space, some drivers will switch to public transport or not make their journeys at all. At least some tourist attractions in Britain are aiming to cut down on ear-horne visitors.

Gibson Mill is a National Trust property in West Yorkshire which, at the turn of the century, was an "entertainments emporium" complete with dance hall and rollerskating rink. The Trust is working to

provide sustainable visitor facilities including catering, lavatories and space for information, education and community use - without using any mains services. The Mill has never had mains services; its power is from renewable energy sources - hydroelectric, solar and biomass - and a 1927 turbine is being restored. Dry compost lavatories will be installed, local spring water supplies will be tapped. When refurbishments are complete, most visitors will be obliged to walk from the entrance to the property, a distance of more

than a mile. (An exception will be made for the less able.)

Farther south east, the Earth Centre near Doncaster is promising reduced-rate admission to anyone who can demonstrate that they have arrived at the former colliery by public transport, or under their own

The drawback is that you will have to wait a year for these commendable Yorkshire ventures to

EUROBEAT: BUDAPEST

The origins of the Budapest spring festival, which continues until 29 March, pre-date the collapse of Communism, but for travellers the joy of capitalism is simple: if you decide today to attend, you can hop on the next plane out (if you

Getting there: London-New York is the busiest and most competitive international air

route in the world, and since the start of this year fares have fallen to their lowest ever

in real terms. At present the best deals are on Air India (daily from Heathrow to JFK),

selling through discount agents for £160-£170 return. Fares on other airlines cost only a

The world's only supersonic aircraft has been flying the north Atlantic for 22 years. When

the first US-bound Concorde took off from Heathrow, the fare was £431 return. The stand-

and British Airways supersonic return fare has now risen to close on £6,000. Yet break-

ing the speed of sound to New York can cost just a quarter of that - and include two

ly service to JFK. The French airline is obliged to discount fares heavily by packaging them

as part of weekend breaks to Manhattan. Before the end of March, Bridge Travel (01992.

456176) will fly you out, club class, from your local airport (Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glas-

gow, London, Manchester or Southampton) to Paris. The next segment, to New York, is

in economy. But the journey home is in Concorde from JFK to Paris, with the last leg in

club. For all this, you pay £1,542. The offer reappears in July and August, when the price

The reason is that Air France has even more trouble than BA in filling seats on its dai-

For 40 years, though, state sponsorship of the arts has done the city proud. The wedding-cake State Opera House offers a Simon Calder sumptuous centre-piece for the festival, whose highlights are like-

ly to be the evenings devoted to the local heroes Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok.

Amid all the official events, it is worth searching out some de facto Fringe festivities. Dotted around the Hungarian capital are can find a seat) without needing all manner of small clubs and community centres, with busy programmes of everything from jazz to Romany music. The local listings magazines, Budapest Week and Budapest Sun, contain details.

The independent way to get there is to get a discounted flight

from Heathrow to Budapest (around £200 if you stay over a Saturday night). Private rooms and hotels are readily available and cheap. The Foreign Office warned this week, however, of "lateovercharging. accompanied by threats of violence, by certain clubs and bars in

For more information, contact the Hungarian National Tourist Office, 46 Eaton Place, London SWIX 8AL (0171-823 1032).

Budapest".

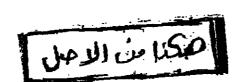


Now you can afford to take the whole squad to France this summer.

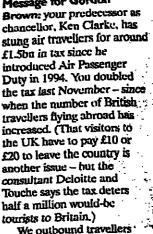


Supersever bookings must be made 1 day in advance and by the 31st Merch 1898.









that you are, no doubt, sorely Tuesday's Budget. I fear that even though the speech takes and elsewhere in Europe. But as just announced by your counterpart in Norway?

will charge a £12 tax for every aircraft seat - whether or not it is filled. If a passenger cannot be found to occupy the place (and pay the tax), the airline has to cough up. Other governments charge only for seats that are filled. Norway's splendidly simple measure is designed to cut waste by persuading airlines to match the number of flights more closely to demand. At present, a scheduled airline that fills seven out of 10 of its seats is doing well; in other words. three out of every 10 flights

world-wide are unnecessary.

with the enormous waste of these glossy publications, the French government has started to tax the holiday companies that produce them. In Britain, around 140 million brochures are produced every year - about five for every foreign holiday. Vietnam touches travellers

up with this list of exclusions: "Vietnam government

Don't give up yet; the list

48 hours



See it, hear it, taste it – but don't believe it. Pascal Wyse offers a guide to America's most neurotic city

Why go now?

The stars are coming out at night in the run-up to the Oscars, the weather has a certain sanity to it, and prices - both in terms of getting there and being there are very much "off peak".

Beam down

London-Los Angeles is the second-busiest route across the Atlantic_after London-New York. Five airlines fly non-stop: Air iarity-a living set teeming with New Zealand, American, British Airways, United and Virgin Atlantic; another airline, Continental, has an allocation of seats on Virgin's flights.

Seats are being sold at absurdly low fares. Expect to pay 1250-£280 through discount agents for travel between April watch out for the buildingand June. If you are prepared to change planes en route, you could get there and back for even less. Business class seats Baywatch crowd. Depending

Check in

From LAX airport, at the centre of LA's west coast, Venice Beach makes a good first stop - given the vast distances devoured by the city. Many of the hotels near the beach have special deals with mini-van services from the airport, which keeps the cost of the trip down to around \$5 per person. The Cadillac Hotel (310-399 8876) has everything from four-person dorms to a private suite – from \$30 double. Spilling straight out on to the beach, this classic 1930s Art Deco building is a good taste of things to come.

If you're looking to stay up in Hollywood, head for the boulevard of the same name. The Magic Hotel, just off the boulevard at Manns Chinese Theater, 7025 Franklin Avenue (213-851 0800) has enormous rooms with kitchens from \$50 for a double.

Get your bearings Greater Los Angeles covers some 8,000 square miles, so you must divide to conquer. Infamously described as "72 suburbs in search of a city", it has been stretched over its desert foun-

dations by a network of freeways

obsessed Angelinos' perception of distances. Strictly speaking, the "city" of Los Angeles is small; but it is the surrounding districts - Santa Monica, Hollywood, Venice Beach, Malibu, Beverly Hills - that carry much of the city's fame.

Take a hike (or a bike) Like much of LA, Venice Beach has a strange cinematic famileverything from the odd Hollywood legend on a pushbike to a colourful cast of extras walking their parrots, selling drunken stories by the dollar or performing bard-sell pizza soliloquies Amongst the Bohemian stalls and street art, sized dumbbell that signifies Muscle Beach, where weighty issues are grunted over by the your way right up the coast through Santa Monica and up to the millionaire pads on Mal-

\$10 a day) from one of the rental shops along the way. It's a straight journey along the coast, but make sure you detour behind the beachfront to take in Venice, where a few silted canals remain of the Italianate pastiche dreamed up by Abbot Kinne in 1905.

way, pick up a bike (for around

Lunch on the move At the end of the walk, capture

a full LA view from the big wheel at Santa Monica Pier before heading inland up Santa Monica Boulevard to 3rd Street Promenade, where you can sample everything that's de rigueur in California's fad factory-from family meals for one to fat-free mountains. Go to Wolfgang Puck Express (don't speak with your mouth full), at No 1315 for famous cheap American grub, especially the Caesar salad

Saturday matinée "Hollyweird" has long disguised its seediness with the glamour of the film industry, and those

live in the nearby hills with the vard for Hollywood (40 minvibrancy. Manns Chinese Theibu Beach. If you flag along the ater is a perfect place to get into the movie business. This enormous cinema, a combination of Behind the deceptively quiet exfake Buddhist temple and Art terior of West Hollywood lie glamorous location for opening

Deco, opened in 1927 as a some of LA's most lively and innights. Outside, the hands and (hang-out for Johnny Depp feet (not to mention cigars) of and the late River Phoenix), Hollywood greats are imprinted in the surrounding concrete. a Go Go (which opened doors If you want to get into the underwear of the stars, peel off farther west to the Lingerie been mixing a range of 200 Museum in Fredericks of Hollywood (6608 Hollywood Boulevard) - a proud purpleand-pink monument to kitsch.

The famous Universal Studios tour is a day in itself, but Universal City Walk (1000 Universal Centre Drive) provides a shorter blast of the same plastic-fantastic feel. Consume the the preposterous shop façades - a 27-ft gorilla, a Chevy crashed in mid air, the neon guitar of a missing giant - rather than the trendy clutter inside.

The sunset burger ... can be found at Mels 24-hour diner at 8585 Sunset Boulevard

- a quintessential catery, as seen are available for £3,000 or less. on which mode of transport you famous big white letters. Catch in George Lucas's American have settled for, you can work a bus up Santa Monica Boule- Graffiti. Slide into a booth. drop a dime into the table-top utes) to absorb the downbeat juke-box, and order perfection in a burger. Night-life

famous clubs. The Viper Rooms

8852 Sunset Boulevard, Whisky for the Doors) and Trader Vics (9876 Wilshire Boulevard) have cocktails since 1955. For a more compact mile of entertainment, and some of LA's famous comedy circuit, try Sunset Strip (Sunset Boulevard, either side of La Cienega Boulevard) and eyeball the best of a very American art form, the billboard.

Sunday morning: pay your

"They've great respect for the dead in Hollywood," Errol Flynn once said, "but none for the living." Even in death, in LA you just have to be seen in the right place with the right people. Tour the tombstone credits of Chico Marx, Clark Gable and Flynn himself, among the manicured groves of Forest

Lawn Cemetry at 1712 South in Evelyn Waugh's The Loved turf for a while, take in a more Angeles. cosmic view from nearby Griffith park, home to the Griffiths Swing out of town Dean was a rebel without a

Bracing brunch Canter's Deli, 419 N Fairfax Avemue (213-651 2030) is a 24hour kosher deli and diner, with beautiful sandwiches the

size of burst mattresses. Cultural afternoon down-

But what do LA's artists make of the place? Duck underground into the Museum of Contemporary Art, California Plaza, 250 S Grand Avenue, and its partner, the Geffen Contemporary, a few blocks away at 152 N Central Avenue (known as the Temporary Contemporary, because of its flexible and slightly makeshift warehouse building). Challenging the monotony of the surrounding financial district, the building by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki - displays art from the Forties to the present day, inCHECK OUT

A plane

No coupon-clipping, promises Virgin Atlantic (01293 747230), for its latest deal. The airline is undercutting the fares offered by British Airways in a promotion with two newspapers. For £183.40 return, Virgin will fly you from Gatwick to Boston or Heathrow to Washington DC. You must book by next Tuesday, 17 March, and complete travel by the end of May.

A boat

The first voyage of P&O Stena Line between Dover and Calais set sail on Tuesday. The two largest ferry operators on the Channel have teamed up because of competition from the Tinnel, with Le Shuttle now taking more than half the traffic.

The new company plans to have a ferry available for immediate boarding at all times between 8am and midnight. David Mott, passenger shipping cor-respondent for Lloyd's List, predicts that fares could rise by 10 per cent in the coming year as a result of the merger.

Upgrade to first class on Saturday or Sunday with Midland Mainline on the line linking Leeds, Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and London. Using the "4-sight" return fare (£34 for four), and each paying an extra £6 each way, a group of four could travel first class from Sheffield to London and back for £20.50 each. Call 0345 125678.

A room

One Devonshire Gardens is both the address and the name of Glasgow's most exclusive hotel. Recents guests include David Bowie and Sting. The weekend special rate is £125 per night (double), not including breakfast. Reservations: 0141-339 2001.

The best place to start the day at Heathrow Airport is the bus-station café, with a complete breakfast for £3.99.

A three-hour driving ban and a fine of BF5,000 (£100) is the penalty facing drivers in Belgium whose alcohol/blood level is in the 0.05-0.08 per cent range. The Belgian Tourist Office warns "two glasses of Belgian lager will get you to that limit". Above 0.08 per cent the penalties are disqualifi-

Britain with the Smaart '98 travel, tourism and culture exhibition. Besides organisations from the Seychelles National Tourism Office to Royal Air Maroc, the exhibition features music, theatre and dancing. It takes place next Saturday, 21 March, at the TUC Congress Centre in Great Russell Street, London WC1 (10.30am-6om), Tickets. price £5, are available on the door or in advance from 0171-978 6846.

... you should make tracks for Holland. for National Museum Weekend (18-19 April) when about 450 of the country's museums are open free or at a reduced rate. Netherlands Board of Tourism: 0891 717777 (a premium-rate number). A deal from Eurostar (0345 303030) will take you from London Waterloo or Ashford, via Brussels, to any station in Holland for £84 return.

... Airtours (08701 577775) will take you from Manchester to the Maldives for £648, with half board at the Meeru Island Resort. Discos, you may be glad to learn, are described

cation and a heavy fine (up to £8,000). A week from now the Francophone world comes to cluding permanent works by Glendale Avenue, as satirised Jackson Pollock, Piet Mondrian and Alberto Giacometti. me: Angelians One. A brief sojourn will give The Temporary is currently - and their you a flavour of the ostenta- housing Elusive Paradise, a fascity – have a hard time tious clamouring for remem- cinating and comprehensive brance. Having gazed at the survey of post-war art in Los keeping things in proportion Photographs: A month from now ... observatory (where James In Mildred Pierce, when Joan Sylvain Crawford said "People have to Grandadam drink somewhere; why not here?" she was standing at the huge, oval bar of the Derby, the engine room of LA's swingdancing scene. On Sunday night at 4500 Los Feliz Boulevard you can take on Jumpin Jimes's swing-dance lesson (8pm-9pm) and show off your moves to bands such as Lee and the A year from now ... Press-on Nails and Ingrid and the Flying Neutrinos. Once incompetently flat on your back, admire the wooden dome ceiling, which used to have water running down it as an early form of air-conditioning.

Train Deluxe & Cruise to Marrakesh

visiting Paris, Lake Lucerne, Cote d'Azur, Menorca, Malaga for Granada, Cadiz for Jerezand Seville, Casablanca, and a few days at the 4-star Atlas Hotel including Eurostar, the Train de Grand Vitesse, the Nostalgic Orient Express & a cruise on board the Swiss-managed MS Switzerland

This wonderful journey makes use of three great trains, the Eurostar to Paris, the Train de Grand Vitesse to the Alps, and across the Alps to Lake Maggiore by Nostalgic Orient Express. It's then onwards across the Mediterranean on board the Swiss-managed MS Swither of the Chee Paris, the island of Menorca. zerland calling at the Coted Azur, the island of Menorca, Malaga for the visit to Granada, Cadiz for the visit to Jerez and Seville, Casablanca where we disembark for a visit of the city and onwards towards the Atlas Mountains for a few days in Marrakesh and the return flight

and stretched with it is the car- who are really "on the money"

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

TTINERARY IN BRIEF

Day 1 Depart Waterloo by Eurostar to Paris. Spend two mights at the 5-star Nikko Hotel. Day 3 Depart by TGY to Bernard onwards to Lake Lucerne for two mights at the Drei Konige or similar. Day 5 Depart by the Nostalgic Orient Express to Lake Maggiore and onwards to the Cotent Express to Lake Maggiore and onwards to the Cotent Assur to join the MS Switzerland for our 5-night cruiss. Day 6 Reach Mahon Menorca. Day 7 at sea. Day 8 Reach Malaga for Granada. Day 9 Reach Cadig for 8 Reach Malaga for Granada. Day 9 Reach Cadig for Jerus and Swille. Day 10 Reach Casablanca - visit city lerus and onwards to the 4-star Atlas in Marrakesh for three nights. Day 13 Return by air to Gatwick.



DEPARTURE DATE & PRICES Wednesday 20th May, 1998 Run-of-the-Ship prices: Lower inside £795 Lower outside £895 - Middle outside £995 Upper outside £1095 - Upper Outside Superior £1195

Single add 40% to the above prices. Supplement first class Eurostar and TGV £85. Inclusions: 5-star hold in Paris, 4-star in Marrakesh and 3-star in Lu-cement room only leads: full board on cruste, sort character advoort bars. cerve on reem only basis, full floored on craise, port chargest stroped basis, sufficiently on the following for reservations.

> **Y**N VOYAGES JULES VERINE 21 Dorset Square, London NW 1 oGG orionalizat ARTA VISSI ATOL SECO

0171-616 1000

LA: AS FAR HOLLYWOOD SEES IT

Billy Urke: "To survive there, you need the ambition of a Latin American revolutionary, the ego of a grand opera tenor and the physical stamina of a cow pony.

Walter Winchell: "A town that has to been to be disbelieved."

Joe Frisco: "The only town in the world where you can wake up in the morning and listen to the birds coughing in the trees."

Stephen Vincent Benet: "Of all the Christbitten places in the two hemispheres, this is the last curly kink in the pig's tail."



Prices are per person based on 2 people sharing and includes return flights from London. All Inclusive accommodation, airport taxes and transfers. Please refer to British Airways Holidays Worldwide 2nd edition brochure for full list of facilities included. Subject to availability for travel between 12th April and 30th June. For full details see ITV Teletext p380 or your travel agent.

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The treasures of

Tutankhamun in

Dorset? Yes, as

good as, complete

with animal-headed

gods and realistic

Emma Haughton

goes tomb raiding

for a family visit

smells.



WHERE ELSE TO SEE EGYPT IN BRITAIN

The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London (0171-636 1555) holds one of the most comprehensive Egyptian collections outside Cairo, with mummies, sculpture, paintings, inscribed and written documents, metalwork, pottery, textiles and jewellery. However, development work may result in some areas being closed. Admission free; small charge for some temporary exhibitions. Open 10am-5pm, Monday to Saturday, 2.30-6pm Sundays. (Closed 10 April, 4 May, 24-26 December, 1 January)

Manchester Museum, University of Manchester (0161 2752634). Two permanent displays of Egyptian artefacts. As well as jewellery and more mummies, visitors can see items used in ancient Egyptian homes. There is a temporary display of Egyptian clothing and costumes. Admission free. Öpen 10am-Spm. Monday to Sanaday

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (01223 332900). The department of antiquities has an impressive collection of Egypt-

ian objects, including mummies

of young men. Small children are welcome. and baby slings and harnesses are provided; pushchairs and prams are not allowed. Family activity sheets are available. The museum welcomes disabled people. but suggests they phone in advance to ensure a successful visit, (01223 332900/37). Admission free. Open 10am-5pm Tuesday to Saturday, 2.15pm-5pm on Sundays. Closed on Good Friday open again on Easter Monday

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (01865 278000). Home to Oxford University's world-famous collection of archaeology, and in the Egyptian collection visitors can gaze at bronze statuettes, objects of faience, amulets, beads and pendants. There are also wall paintings, glass vessels, papyrus scrolls, canopic jars from Egyptian tombs, and mummified figures. Admission free. Open 10am-4pm Tuesday to Saturday, 2pm-4pm Sundays. Closed for Easter, 10-12 April, reopens Easter

Monday, 2pm-4pm Sarah-lane Wakefield

The Pharaoh of Dorchester

nal artefacts prompted the Egyptian covering the bandaged mummy. government to cease foreign exhibitions, so it replicates (most faithfullv) the ancient loot that attracted such huge crowds in the Seventies.

The high point is an atmospheric mock-up of the young king's antechamber and tomb. As you walk in, your senses are assailed by herbal smells that recall the unguents and aromatic oils used in the original tomb, and by the voluptuous beauty of the treasure it contained. The suggested that the boy king suffered antechamber shows exactly how a long, slow death at the hands of his these riches were arranged when chief adviser). Beyond the spine-tin-

likely setting for Egyptian treasure, or there was space, giving the air of some photos of Tutankhamun's ago. but the Tutankhamun exhibition in a musty and forgotten corner of an Dorchester, Dorset, offers a compact exclusive junk shop. The burial yet fascinating tribute to one of the chamber itself is dominated by the greatest archaeological discoveries huge gold coffin, captured at the moever made. This exhibition was put ment that Carter first opened it up together when damage to the origi- to reveal the famous gold mask

> There are plenty of other exhibits and information on the treasure, including the Rosetta stone and its role in the discovery of the tomb to a fascinating account of the political machinations that rumbled on behind the throne, and may well have led to Tutankhamun's death by murder at the tender age of 18 (though recent research by Professor Robert Brier, of Long Island University, has

mummified remains, and a life-size mock-up of his body. Having got their attention, the surrounding displays then get in a bit of education by the back door, covering each stage of the 70 days it took to embalm the

Some of the most speciacular exhibits are the painstaking replicas of the jewellery and other objects that accompanied the king - the opulent solid gold collars, the richly decorated pendants and amulets and, most famous of all, the gold mask which came to epitomise this most romantic of all discoveries for the w. rld.

body and prepare it for burial.

But it's perhaps the religious figures - the jackal Anubis, god of embalming; Hathor, the cow-headed goddess; and the hawks symbolic of Howard Carter first broke into it in gling atmosphere of the tomb itself, show, their eerie and inscrutable see it's fun for the younger ones as were around a long, long time ago. it made me thi 1922; curiously, they seem not so there's a good dose of yuck factor for majesty still as potent today as it well, especially the mummified body. They built much houses and Pyramids, to Egypt, too.

The visitors Lisa Faiers took her three children, Ned, seven, Monty, five, and Archie,

before, and both times I've thor- a mummy is made. oughly enjoyed it. What I liked best was having all the aromas and the noise in the tomb; it really feels as if tomb. It was really dark and spooky, you're in there. All in all, the atmosphere feels authentic. I'm sure it's the next best thing to going to Egypt; the willy on the mummy, the gold-in fact, it made me feel I wanted to en chair in the tomb and the people

I could have done with several hours of peace and quiet to take it all in It's maybe better for older children, mask which was an Egyptian head, who can read all the information that's and I liked the golden dog. the god Horus - that steal the on offer, but, having said that, I can

A rural county town may seem an un-much displayed as dumped wherev- the kids, including some rather grue- must have been nearly 3,000 years -although it's not a real mummy. But and they had flat teeth because Medallion man: detail from don't take the kids unless they're old sand and stones blew into their bread enough and brave enough to cope with that, along with being spooked by the

strange sensations in the tomb. I think, if I go again, I'll go over some of the information about Egypt with the boys beforehand, so they are Lisa: I've been to the exhibition once better prepared about things like how

Monty: The scariest bit was the scared me, but the rest didn't. I liked go and see the real thing for myself. with the stabbers - I think they're called spears. They were golden. I liked the person who had a whole

The Egyptians were people who

from the desert. I wouldn't really Photograph: Axiom want to live in Egypt, though, because I'd be dead by now.

Ned: I liked seeing the treasures and looking at the mask. It was a sort of I'm not sure he looked like that in real life. It was exciting to see the mummified body. His teeth and toes were all white where you could see the bones sticking out. The pretend tomb

was good, too; it was really smelly. I really like the Egyptians. They lived in Egypt most of the time and they liked treasures, and they didn't like killing animals - in fact they worshipped snakes and scarab beetles. Tutankhamun was an Egyptian king but he was only 18 when he died. I really enjoyed it at the exhibition and it made me think I'd quite like to go

Tutankhamun's tomb

The deal Getting there: the Tutankhamun Exhibition (01305 269571) is in High golden face with a long blue beard, but Street West in Dorchester town centre.

Opening times: daily 9.30am-5.30pm, except for three days at Christmas.

Admission: adults £3.50, children over five £2.25. A family ticket for two adults and two children costs £9.95. Facilities: There is a well stocked shop, including books covering every aspect of ancient Egyptian civilisation and all kinds of Egyptian paraphernalia, activities and novelties for both children and adults.

Access: A ramp enables wheelchairs to negotiate two steps; thereafter the exhibition is on the flat.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

ost to Thomas Cook Holidays, Freepost (PE 1095), PO Box 300, Pet



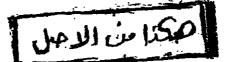
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call **0171 293 2219**.

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on page 6.

Parting shots

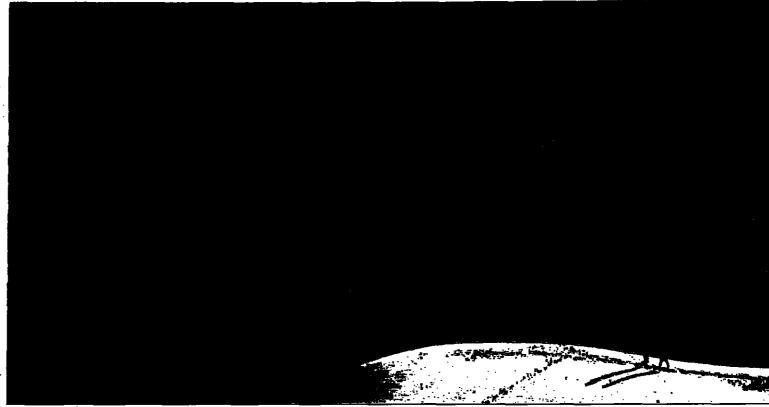


Selecting the third and final tranche of photographs from The Independent/Wanderlust/Nikon Travel Photograph of the Year competition has been almost as agonising as being gored dur-ing an Andalucian buil run. Forty photographs were highly commended by the judges, but only a few can appear here. We have chosen three images in which the photographer has been working close to the limit.

Colin Woods' shot of the west face of the Aiguille de Plan in the French Alps (below right) shows the rewards of testing the limits of endurance. The painful instant (left) that Jim Sherwood captured at the town of Vejer de la Frontera one Easter Sunday was achieved by pushing for the best vantage point as well as technical perfection. Paul Franklin's wideeyed picture of a young mountain gorilla in Burundi, meanwhile, tested the limits of mutual respect between subject and photographer.

Our competition has proved such a success that it will be run again this year. Look out for details in The Independent and Wanderlust magazine in the autumn; for a subscription to Wanderlust, call 01753 620426.





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ANTERIES.

iravel advice on Egypt In a major incident near Luxor on 17 November 1997, gunmen killed 58 tourists, including six British

Since 1992 extremists have conducted a campaign of violence against the Egyptian government, mainly in the provinces of Minya and Assiut (half-way between Cairo and Luxor) but with sporadic attacks in other areas. Most of these incidents have been directed at the police, or were sectarian in

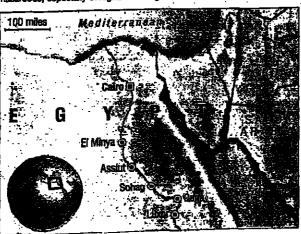
In April 1996 gummen källed 18 Greek tourists in Cairo. On 18 September 1997, two men, acting atone, killed 10 people, mainly German tourists, also in Cairo. Since the Luxor incident extremist groups have threatened further attacks against tourists; these threats should be taken seriously. Visitors to all parts of Egypt are advised to be vigilant, and to respect any advice from the local security authorities. Visitors are advised to exercise

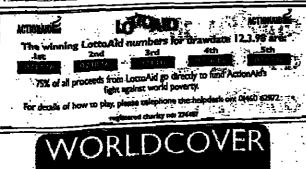
great caution when visiting the Nile Valley south of and including Minya

Local driving conditions and poor vehicle maintenance make road travel outside the main cities hazardous, especially at night. In the greater risk.

(Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit, 0171-238 4503 or http://www.fco.gov.uk or see Ceefax on BBC2, p470 onwards)

... from the US State Department For the past several years, Egyptian extremist groups seeking to destablise the government have attacked targets in Egypt, including Egyptian police, security officials and tourists. Most of these attacks have occurred in the Nile Valley provinces of Minya, Assiut, Sohag and Qena. There was one major attack in Cairo in 1996, and another In September 1997, in which tourists were targeted and killed. In November 1997, there was a major attack at a tourist site near Luxor in Upper Egypt, in which 58 tourists were killed. As a result of the attacks on tourists, Egyptian authorities have enhanced security measures to protect tourists in Ecvot. Nevertheless, the potential for terrorist attacks exists, and American citizens should exercise caution throughout Egypt. Because the extremists have been more active in the Nile Valley governates of Minya, Assiut, Sonag, and Dene (north of Dena City). these areas should be considered a





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Yes, I trust these men to sell me a Pyramid

The massacre in Luxor last year, in which 58 tourists died, was a disaster for Egypt's tourist industry. But, as Douglas Hurd writes, the impressive security that now surrounds some of the most glorious sights in the world should encourage people to visit them - and soon, before the Sphinx, the Pyramids and the Valleys of the Kings and the Queens are once more heaving with crowds of tourists

Witney." "When did you book this holiday?"

"Just a day or two after the terrorist shootings. We thought anc 3d won bluow roxul tadt of the safest places in the world to take a boliday." In the spring sunshine, exploring the Valley of the

Queens, astounded once again by the huge pillars at Karnak, and walking the elegant, empty corridors of the Winter Palace Hotel, it was hard to disagree with my former constituents. I was there with an American and an Italian colleague to look at the security precautions which the Egyptians put in place after the shooting of tourists in Luxor last November. We visited the three sites that attract the greatest number of tourists: the Pyramids and the Sphinx, the Egyptian museum in Cairo, and Luxor. We can say nothing about other sites, and of course no one can guarantee safety at any site, but we were impressed by the thoroughness of the Egyptian reaction to that

sacked his minister of the interior, the governor of Luxor, and others whom he held responsible for the security failure last November. New, brisk, fectiveness after six or 12 1974 to 1997.

"Hello, Mr Hurd. We're from serious men have been installed in their place. Each of the sites now has a security plan including control of access, completely new systems of patrolling, unity of command and communications, and new attention to the quality and training of the securi-

ty forces. At first the remaining tourists complained that the security presence was too oppressive. So the sharp-shooters have been removed from obvious positions, and you have to look carefully at the hillsides to spot them and the small tents which are their homes. It is reassuring rather than alarming to see camel patrols of armed police moving in line among the

dunes behind the Pyramids. It was a strange experience to be briefed in one car by a lady archaeologist about the latest discoveries, and simultaneously in the other ear by the police general about his security plan. We were struck by how ready the Egyptians were to receive ideas from outside.

In our report to the new minister of the interior, we emphasised above all the need for President Mubarak at once consistency. It is one thing to have in place new systems and new men to execute them. It is another to maintain those sys-

Staleness leads to slackness, to the cutting of corners, to a lapse back into the dozy ways

The Egyptians have made an impressive effort. They know that they have to regain confidence in the security of the main tourist attractions if they are to save the livelihoods of the thousands of Egyptians whose jobs depend on visitors.

At the moment Luxor is an amazingly attractive place to viswithout crowds, without noise. The Egyptians hope that the crowds will return. Their success will depend on constant testing and supervision of the men and methods now in place. The second British couple I met in Luxor came from Leeds.

This was the fifth visit which the mother had made to what she considers the most extraordinary sight in the world. "Now at last I understand

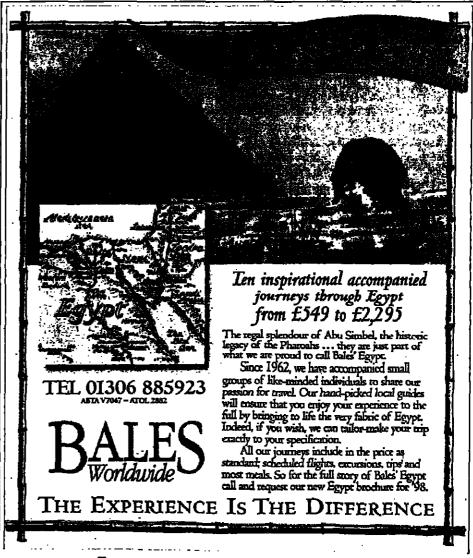
what Mum's been going on about all these years," said the daughter. That is the reaction which

the Egyptians hope for. They deserve luck, and will above all need persistence to keep it

Lord Hurd is a former foreign secretary, and was MP for East Oxtems and those men in full ef- fordshire, and later Witney, from



down the Nile: security is now tight but visitors miss the former laidback charm



Cross-country skiing is the original form of the sport- indeed, it was the only form until some plucky Brits built the first ski lifts 100 years or so ago. In some places it is still just a way of getting about, but in Italy it has developed into a sport with at least some of the trappings of the downhill equivalent

than screaming down the black runs and scaring the life out of your nearest and dearest. David Bowen took a gentler route across country – and found a few natural bonuses along the way

There's more to skiing

The ibex is a strange heast, with great, curving horns almost as long as its stumpy legs. Though it was on a ledge on the mountainside opposite, and we had no bin-oculars, there was no mistaking those horns. We tramped back through the forest, following a path trodden in the snow by some maniacs who were climbing frozen waterfalls farther up the valley. We passed a couple of elderly locals, the first people we had seen for an hour. They lent us their binoculars and, yes, there was the ibex with its horns. Funny looking things, ibexes.

The funnier thing was that we were supposed to be on a skiing holiday.

We were indeed on a skiing holiday but not the sort where we and 1,000 others went up a mountain slowly and came down it fast. This was cross-country skiing, the gentle cousin of downhill.

One of its advantages is that you can, if you want, take off your skis and go ibexspotting instead. No pressure, no lift queues-and shoes that are more like comfy trainers than Neil Armstrong's number 12s.

Cross-country skiing is the original form of skiing - indeed, it was the only form until some plucky Brits built the first ski lifts 100 years or so ago. It has many names: crosscountry, langlauf, ski de fond and - here in Italy - sci nordico. In some places it is still pared tracks and whooshing past us with- looked pretty in the brochure, but also be-

The flat of the land

TRAVEL: OVERSEAS

Canada

developed into a sport with at least some opprobrious) comments. of the trappings of the downhill jobby.

We were staying in Cogne, in the Aosta Valley - not much known among downhill skiers (though there is a cable car, and some of the emptiest pistes in Christendom), but a great centre for cross-country skiing. The day after we left, 1,300 skiers were to take part in the Marcia Gran Paradiso, a 45-km slog to the ends of three valleys, then back to the centre. The ski trails were hardly crowded, but most of the people we did see were in full, Lycra-clad training mode. My wife and I felt like a couple of Morris Minors that had strayed on to a practice session at Silverstone - but the Ferraris were good humoured, hopping out of the pre-

just a way of getting about, but in Italy it has out any opprobrious (or, at least, audibly cause Italy is a rather safer bet than but not exhausting. The equipment was de-

We had chosen to go cross-country skiing because we wanted to ski but were of nice surprise was that after the first day, a quite different standards downhill, so would not otherwise have spent much time point of somnolence: a real Alpine village together. We decided, slightly nervously, to ignore those who told us that cross-country at weekends, when cars with Turin numwas the most exhausting sport there is: none ber plates pour in. We spent hours sitting of our informants had in fact tried it. Remarkably few British people have - principally, I suspect, because it is not offered by any of the big travel companies. I mirably efficient operation in York that specialises in slightly offbeat holidays, and had a number of cross-country options.

We chose Cogne mainly because it part of the kingdom of Savoy.

Take Off

France for vegetarians (of whom my wife is one). It all worked beautifully. The first Sunday, Cogne became peaceful almost to rather than a ski resort. It gets crowded only in a bar inhabited by locals playing cards. We could have spent days.

Secondly, the food was excellent (few problems for a veggie), not least in the threebonus for non-Italian-speakers is that almost everyone in the Aosta valley speaks French - an inheritance from the time when it was

lightfully light compared with that for downhill skiing: the comfy shoes clipped at the front on to slim skis. We spent an hour with an instructor, which was plenty for the basics. If you can walk, you can ski across

It is possible to ski on unprepared snow, but we stuck to the tracks, which are "bashed" daily. These are a combination of rail and road: you can either fit your skis into the twin grooves that run along each track, or you can go freestyle on the flat eventually tracked down Instravel, an ad-star Hotel Sant'Orso where we stayed. A section. You are most likely to do the latter either if you are skilled enough to "skate", or if you need more control going up or down a hill.

Hills are the only potential source of disaster. Uphill involves "herringboning", or For snow reports, see page 19

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putting your skis in V formation and waddling - surprisingly, not too exhausting. Downhill requires variations on the snow plough - but because the track can be narrow, anything more than a gentle incline can be alarming. At least you can take your skis off and walk.

In our week's skiing, we found only one seriously bothersome slope. It was worth it, though, because it led back into the village of Lillaz from the valley of Valleille beyond. This was a magical place - frozen waterfalls to either side, in the middle a bubbling stream straddled by wafer-thin bridges of ice, and complete silence. Well, almost complete: the occasional Ferrari whooshed past, more intent on reaching the finishing line than staring ibex-hopefully at the crags. We looked for ibexes, we looked for chamois and we looked for golden eagles. During the week we saw them all - but then we were Morris Minors, not Ferraris.

David Bowen paid £500 through Inntravel (01653 628811) for the week's cross-country skiing in Italy. The price included return flight to Geneva, train and taxi transfers and three-star, half-board accommodation.

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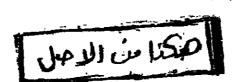
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Rural rescue

Wherever you look, there is work to be done: coppicing, ditch-digging, dry-stone walling, tree-planting. Duff Hart-Davies joins the volunteers on an unpaid, but rewarding, project

Who would be brave enough to £20 for the privilege of putting aged by staff from the eat the Jew's ears? That was the in two days' work, and nobody question teasing the volunteers seemed dismayed by the basic when they pulled off the hill on nature of the lodgings. There Saturday evening, carrying hat- are, Ian explained, three levels fuls of the brown, rubbery fun- of accommodation for such gus which they had peeled from projects. "Luxury" means that the bark of elder bushes during their day's work. At the very least, the dozen as in a youth hostel, and in "Sim-

young people who spent last ple", as at North Nibley, you sleep on the floor. weekend toiling on the steep southern slope of Cam Long Down, near Stroud, under the auspices of the British Trust for the Berkeley vale at right angles Conservation Volunteers, had a from the main Cotswold esgood break in the country. The carpment - a long, high backweather stayed more or less dry. the site was a spectacular one, the company cheerful: everyone to dam the Severn. More profelt that he or she had benefit- saic commentators reckon that ed from exercise in the open air it was curved by retreating glacand achieved something worth-

The name of the Trust is arating views. too long, and its abbreviated form - BTCV - sounds uncomfortably like the initials of the limestone grassland of the some television company; but upper slopes. By the time I it is an admirable organisation, joined the team on Saturday afund unobtrusively achieves an ternoon they had already felled enormous amount in the countryside. Last weekend was typical.In a good fire blazing. In seconds

old Ian Devon, who got a de- a bow-saw and set to work. If the pace was leisurely, gree in environmental science at Bradford University, spent six morale was high. People months in Uganda, and then pegged away with their chosen found that nobody in England weapons - hand saws, slashers, would give him a job because he clippers - and exchanged the had neither a master's degree nor two years' practical experi- come from far and wide: Jane agreed that the gastronomic exence. His response was to become a full-time volunteer from Birmingham, Tom from officer with BTCV, and he is Bristol. Sanjida O'Connell, a with butter, salt, pepper and garnow working 50 or 60 hours a week for no pay. He it was who had inspected the work site, sharpened the comparative psychology of hutools, booked accommodation man beings and animals, the end it tasted like old poly-

and bought food. He it was who met the party in Gloucester, drove them to their billet in the village hall at North Nibley, and cooked supper.

the establishment has beds. "Standard" probably has bunks, Cam Long Down is a freestanding hill running out into

bone dumped there (some say) by the Devil, in a futile attempt iers at the end of the last ice age. Either way, it commands exhil-

The weekend's project was to clear scrub that had invaded an impressive number of elder and hawthorn bushes, and had charge of the party was 24-year- I was equipped with gloves and

> odd volley of banter. They had from London, a second Ian television producer, also from Bristol, is already, at 26, the author of three books, two on the frying-pan and looked at us," third a novel about a researcher who goes to Ireland to study

The top of Cam Long Down belongs to Stroud District Council, but the land is manWHAT, WHEN, WHERE

Fancy a glass of Cock Robin, a half of Old Tom and little light finger buffet? There's a waiting list, so put your name down now for a tour of the Unicorn Brewery, a family concern started in 1838 by William Robinson when he bought the Unicorn Inn in Stockport. After the tour during which your

guide will explain. the terms "mashing, "wort" and "rousing", you can sample the end product in the Unicorn Room. But be warned: there are lots of stairs and uneven surfaces in the brewery. Unicorn Brewery, Stock-

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty, and with us was

John Morris, the service's local

project officer. When we

downed tools for a cup of tea,

perching around a gas ring on

precipitous turf, he explained

that grazing by cattle or sheep

is by far the best means of main-

taining rough grassland, with its

distinctive flowers and insects,

and he spoke lyrically of plans

to seek a lottery grant for the

purchase of a "flying flock" of

sheep, which would eat its way

round important sites in the

kept everyone going with a

skilful mixture of instruction, en-

couragement and cajolery, switching people to new jobs

whenever they began to look

dispirited. As he described the

variety of seasonal tasks that

come up - coppicing, hedge-lay-

ing, dry-stone walling, tree-

planting - he said admiringly,

These volunteers are more

effective than a lot of paid

workers. They're more meticu-

lous. They look at a site, say,

'Right!' and really get their

that to the Jew's ears - and it

seemed a poor reward for effort

expended that the result was so disappointing.

Next morning they were all

still on their feet - yet everyone

periment had been a severe let-

down. They'd done their best

lic, but the fungus had resisted

attack. "It just lay there in the

said one of them. "And in the

Details of work projects from

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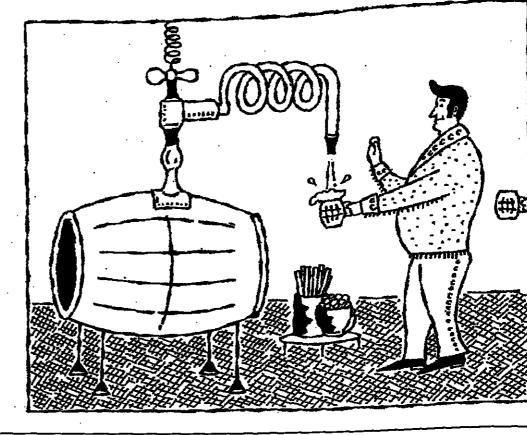
In the evening they did just

teeth into it."

Back at work, Ian Devon

Manchester **全上**Steckpert

port. Cheshire. Tours are at 7.30pm, but go in the afternoon if you want to see the shire horses. Prices: £3.25, or £6.20 with buffet.





NATURE NOTE

Over the past few days the forest floor has swiftly changed from grey-brown to brilliant green, with the annual eruption of wild garlic. Properly known as ransoms - or in some parts of the country as ramps - Allium ursinum pushes up its fleshy, spear-shaped leaves at an astonishing rate, until they are Sin or 10in tall. Also astonishing is the smell, which, on chilly mornings, sweeps down out of the woods in great waves.

Young leaves make a deliciously pungent salad, and country lore has it that a rabbit which has been chased through garlic can go straight into the pot without further scasoning, so highly spiced is it when it reaches the kitchen. If free-range chickens eat garlic bulbs, the taste invades their eggs.

As the plants grow to maturity, each sends up a single stalk bearing a cluster of white, star-like flowers, so that you get the impression that there has been a sudden snowstorm. The anti-bacterial action of wild garlic has been credited with many medicinal properties, not least an ability to cure piles, and it is said to alleviate whooping cough, if applied to the soles of the feet.

Duff Hart-Davis

what on earth

Moreover of the same

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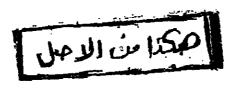
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What on earth's going wrong?

Manufacturers say that cars are becoming more and more reliable. So how come the annual breakdown figures never change? James Ruppert reports on a survey that shows up the chief culprits

Cars are getting better all the time, or comes second with 7 breakdowns, folso we are told - safer, more environment-friendly, with better fuel consumption, higher build quality - and, of course, they are more reliable than

Well, maybe not. The jury is very much out on that last point because, according to a reliability survey by Lex, the chances of breaking down in your company car this year are currently one in four. If you think that is worrying. back in 1997 it was only a one-in-five chance. That now poses the question of just why cars seem to be getting more

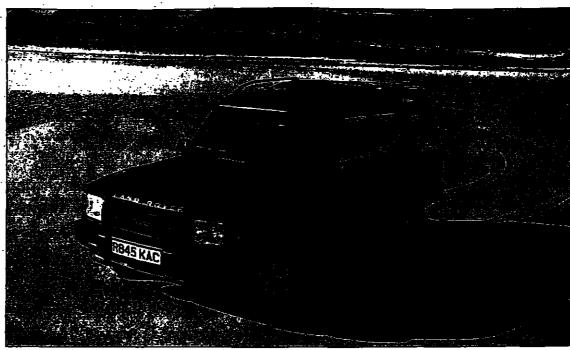
The report makes fascinating reading, based as it is on assessing the mechanical reliability of Lex Vehicle Leasing's 88,048 strong fleet. Over a 12-month period Lex drivers experienced 21,620 mechanical faults. That is an average of 24.5 breakdowns per 100 vehicles.

All driver-induced faults - such as flat batteries and road traffic accidents, plus alarm/immobiliser faults were taken out of the statistics. Only manufacturers with more than 300 vehicles on the Lex fleet were included. Looking at the winners and losers in this survey, the initial conclusion would be that if you are behind the wheel of a Japanese or a German car, the chances of coming to an unscheduled stop are reassuringly remote. Mitsubishi comes out top, with just 5.8 breakdowns per 100 vehicles. Astonishingly, Jaguar

lowed by all the usual ultra-reliable suspects: BMW (8.2), Honda (9.7) and Audi (10). Another big surprise was Fiat's showing of 11 breakdowns in 100. But probably the main area of interest to every driver and customer is just how badly certain volume and prestige manufacturers did. Ford scored a lowly 31.9, Vauxuall did even worse, at 32.2, and Rover, which, let's not forget, is now a BMW subsidiary, chalked up a truly terrible average of 34.7. And the German company's off-road operation Land Rover performed just as poorly, at 25.8, the abysmal Discovery accounting for the majority of breakdowns.

Yet those traditional bastions of build quality Volvo (21.3) and Mercedes (13.4) were adjudged to have per-formed less than brilliantly. Whilst Mercedes's now obsolete 190 has been the model of reliability, its successor, the C class, has encountered all sorts of niggly problems. So what is going on? Or rather, going wrong? A good place to start would be the manufacturers.

Black marks for Rover and Land Rover, who both failed to get back to me. I can't help wondering whether their tardiness in telephone etiquette has some connection with the quality of their products. Over at Volvo a spokeswoman said: "The results do not reflect our own findings. We can point to the 1997 car quality summary report which



Discovered: In the Lex survey, the Land Rover Discovery accounted for the majority of breakdowns

vey was based on high-mileage business users, not the typical Volvo driver."

Mercedes had a similar line: "Our findings do not show that cars are becoming worse. Just look at the service intervals for our vehicles, which has been extended from 6,000 to 9,000 miles, and now the computer tells you when it needs servicing, which potentially means a 12,000 to 15,000 window.

"And anyway, the Lex survey included commercial vehicles, which work much harder than passenger cars. We make vans, BMW and Jaguar don't."

Obviously manufacturers don't like this sort of survey, but it is the rescue covered cars up to two years old, and services that have to pick up the pieces. Volvo customers were more satisfied At the RAC, Peter Brill had an inter-

than they have ever been. The Lex sur- esting statistic of his own. "Our volume of breakdowns never reduces. We deal with 3 million a year, and our findings suggest that mechanically, cars are in fact much more reliable. The majority of breakdowns are caused by failure of consumable items, such as tyres and batteries, or can be traced to driver error. In fact our number one call out is a flat battery, followed by alternators, and then wheel changes."

> The AA says that increasingly complex alarm and electrical systems, and even the pressures of modern living, contribute to breakdowns. Michael Harlow, managing director of ABS, a company that inspects and values used cars, says: "I don't think that cars in themselves are getting any less reliable, but there must

> > need 16 valves."

BMW's head of research and

development, Dr Wolfgang Reitzle. "You'll see it doesn't

So we'll do just that. The new

engine is indeed smoother -

slightly - but it doesn't fire your senses with enthusiasm the way

the six-cylinder engines, or the

eager, sonorous 16-valver in the

rival Alfa 156 can. If this is a good

car, it's good despite its engine

rather than partly because of it.

And I find myself thinking that

the virtues of this BMW, this in-

terpretation of the "ultimate

driving machine" as BMWs ads

would have it, are rather passive.

It's quiet. It's beautifully made.

It looks good, if a little ornate.

wheel drive helping to give a satisfying launch out of corners, but

pected, given that the front wheels have nothing to do but

ness and discipline than its pre-

series goes on sale here, you can

judge for yourself.

decessor.

be a human element, in that people become over-confident and expect their cars to run faultlessly."

But Mr Harlow has evidence that the 16-valve engines fitted to Vauxhalls are causing trouble.

"Vectra, Corsa, Astra and Tigra engines have insufficient inlet valve clearance," he claims, "which is a pretty fundamental oversight in the design. In my opinion, the car-buying public is carrying out around 5 to 10 per cent of the manufacturer's development work. In the first few years of a new model's life, most customers are simply debugging them." Manufacturers may not think that their cars are becoming any less reliable. However, the driving public may be reaching a different conclusion.

BMW 318I

Specifications

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that the BMW lacks.

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Rivals



GAVIN GREEN

Whoever ends up buying Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, I hope it isn't a British bidder. Large British companies, including Vickers (current custodian) and British Aerospace (former Rover keeper) have consistently proved themselves incapable of managing British car makers. Their "drip feed investment/ where are the profits?" short-term mentality is inimical to the interests of a hugely investment-intensive car company. Is it any wonder that the Germans and the Japanese, who can always see beyond the next quarterly forecast, are the world's most successful motor industry protagonists, along with those entrepreneurial giants in America?

A consortium of wealthy British enthusiasts would be even more disastrous. At least two such groups are in the running to buy Rolls, with big-name backers allegedly including Mohamed al Payed and the Formula One impresario Bernie Ecclestone. A consortium led by the barrister Michael Shrimpton reckons that it can raise the money from wealthy owners, while another, led by Kevin Morley, former marketing director of Rover, says it can raise venture capital, which, of course, would be even

Rolls-Royce's current boss, Graham Morris, also hopes that a foreign company buys Rolls, "There is no suitable UK bidder. I could have raised the money to buy Rolls-Royce Motor Cars as part of a management buyout, and, as with most management buy-outs, we probably could have made a lot of money for ourselves. But this company desperately needs a big company to buy it, and invest in it, and help it."

Morris says that must be another car company, and he hopes to be part of the plan, by staying on as Rolls-Royce's chief executive officer.

The nightmare scenario is that one of these quaint British consortia, full of high nationalistic passion but with precious little practical experience, bankrolled by some Anglophile billionaire, will offer the highest price to Vickers. Vickers, being a plc, is duty bound to accept the best offer for its shareholders - in most cases, the highest bid. Rolls is then owned by a another bunch of short-term idealists/ profiteers who soon prove themselves eminently unsuitable, and the "For Sale" palaver soon starts all over again. Sooner or later Rolls is going to be owned by a major foreign car company - almost certainly German, and almost certainly BMW - so you might as well get it over with now.

Fortunately, the omens, should BMW buy Rolls, are good. Blue-chip British car brands have recently prospered under foreign ownership. Jaguar was getting nowhere as a Tory-privatised plc, no matter how masterful the former chairman, John Egan, was at suggesting otherwise. Once sold to Ford (making millionaires out of many of its short-term investors) it prospered massively. The cars are now better than ever, and, come 2001, production will have more than quadrupled compared with

BMW's purchase of Rover has proved more difficult. not least because Rover was even more of a basket case than Jaguar when the Germans marched in. But things are getting better. The first BMW-influenced model, the Land Rover Freelander, is the first internationally competitive Rover Group car for more than 20 years. And the next, the Rover 600/800-replacing R40, to be shown at next year's Geneva show, promises to be as well made as a BMW, while being true to traditional Rover brand values (comfort, gentility, spaciousness, styling majesty). This is in contrast to all the sad and substandard Rovers made over the past decade or so, which have mostly been rebodied versions of old-school Hondas or, in the case of the recently departed Rover 100, a rebadged Metro.

After numerous lightweight, or non-car-literate, British Rover managers, who had little or no idea of what Rover should stand for (a weakness subsequently exposed in the type of cars that were launched) and no international experience, BMW boss Bernd Pischetsrieder is of a hugely higher calibre. What should a Rover be? I asked him, a few months after the BMW take-over. "Cheaper Jaguars," he replied. He is spot on, of course.

If the British car industry had had a few Pischetsrieders of its own in positions of power, back in the dim and dark days of the Sixties and Seventies, then our indigenous industry might not have self-destructed so ignominiously. And Rolls-Royce Motor Cars would not be better off being owned by the Germans.

Registration Numbers



More room for improvement

Roadtest: John , Simister drives the new BMW 318i

TAX C NUMBER

day cottage,

ent vacancies.

Oh, the trials of success. You make a product which everybody wants, which achieves an almost iconographic status in its market - and then it's time to replace it because you know you can make a better one. What do you do? Strike out in a bold. new direction in the hope that your customers admire your design ethos so much that they will follow you come what may? Or play safe, building on what went before, lest you kill the goose that laid the golden eggs?

You will see from the picture that BMW has gone for caution. The new 3-series, set to be the most-bought BMW of all, looks a lot like the old one. Nearly crash, building it better, makeverything has changed in the ing it quieter, and causing it to new car, but only slightly. BMW's stylists, masterminded frontal structure can absorb

such an assertion of conservatism, but a creator always finds it difficult to stand back from the creation. Bangle could point - has pointed - at the rounded cut-outs for the headlamp lenses, at the tapering ridge along the side sills, at the way the so-called "double kidney" front grille is now built into the bonnet (I've never seen kidneys that shape), at the stepped rear lights reminiscent of those found on the previous 5-series model - but the visual deal is fundamentally the same.

Where's the progress, then? It's more a case of rewarding loyalty, achieved by giving buyers enough extra space in the back for the 3-series no longer to be laughably cramped, greatly improving the car's ability to cocoon its occupants in a need less maintenance. The

senger compartment caves in, and every version comes with eight airbags. There are two in the front, as normal; one in each door panel; and, on each side, one secreted in the windscreen pillar and above the front doors. which bursts forth as a giant

There's no doubt that the new car is better. It feels better the moment you sit in it: it's lighter, airier, made of betterquality materials. All versions have electric seat adjustment, and you can programme up to three keys separately to adjust the driver's seat automatically to suit the key owner's preferences, on unlocking the car.

Also standard are "corner brake control*, a system which automatically adjusts the braking effort on each wheel to help you keep control when braking in a slippery bend; and a traction-control system to help stop the rear wheels from slithby the American Chris Bangle, more than 60 per cent more ering their grip away, because pace as BMW. "Drive it," says

would be mortified to hear crash energy before the pas- all BMWs are still rear-wheel-The new range starts as a

four-door saloon, so the current Coupé, Compact and Touring. continue for a while. As before there are sweet-spinning sixcylinder engines towards the top of the range (320i, 323i - 2.5litres, in fact - and 328i), and humble four-cylinder versions lower down. One of these is a powerful and efficient new diesel, with direct injection, another is the engine that powers what has always been the mainstay of the 3-series range, the most attainable of the aspir-

This engine has grown from 1.8 litres to 1.9, though the name hasn't grown with it, and now incorporates a pair of balancer shafts to make it run more smoothly. Yet it still has just eight valves in its cylinder head instead of the now-usual 16, an odd result for a company as pur-

ational, the 318i.

torrent of abuse, but it never

came because he couldn't have

more than tinkering under the

bonnet and taking the engine to

bits to find out what the prob-

I had learned my lesson, so

once I had got rid of that bor-

rible Range Rover I went and

did the decent thing and

bought, for £1,000, a very old

Series 3 Land Rover which has

never let me down.

and now impressively refined as well as technically intriguing with its hydrop-

In the end, it's all rather anodyne. This would be a great car to own, and no doubt to be seen neumatic suspension. to own, but as a car for the technically-informed lover of driv-Mercedes-Benz C180: ing, it misses the mark. Could 19,990. Lacks power and BMW be losing its way? Come equipment compared with September, when the new 3-BMW, but that badge still

counts for a lot.

MOTORING

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MY WORST CAR: PAUL HEINEY'S RANGE ROVER

In the early Eighties it was one of the trappings of moving to the country - you had to buy a Range Rover to fit in. But first of all I bought a very ancient Land Rover which proved to be incredibly faithful and utterly

Unfortunately, the lure of the Range Rover proved too great, and that was how I came to own my worst car.

I suppose I should have realised that this white Range Rover would turn out to be a white elephant, because it was so suspiciously cheap in the first to a halt. I found that I had to place. The biggest problem it had was getting all eight cylinical sequence, and that led to an endless series of breakdowns. The fault could never properly



miles the car would just come pump out, lift the bonnet, remove the distributor cap, then ders to fire in some sort of log-put it back on to get it running again. Then I had a stroke of luck, and smashed it up.

Towing a horse box one day, be detected, and after about 30 it jackknifed and got badly

damaged. No one was hurt, but he had broken down on the way I was happy because I thought back to Ipswich. I waited for a the insurance company would write it off. They didn't. The assessor been happier. He liked nothing

looked at the mess and reckoned that the car could be rebuilt, but that didn't make it any more reliable. I advertised it in the local paper and I had a response from a collector of vintage Rolls-Royces. Rather than tax them all, he

wanted to tow them to shows and thought that the Range Rover would be ideal. And so it proved, because when I took him for a test drive it behaved itself impeccably. I felt a pang of guilt when he paid over the money, but thought no more about it until I got a phone call that evening. His new novel, Domino's Effect',

It was the chap who had is published in April by Hodder bought the Range Rover, and & Stoughton, price £16.99.

Paul Heiney has been a national radio and television presenter since 1975 and has written widely on farming and country matters.

and in The Independent on Sunday in the Real Life section.

Camellias: all or nothing

A dash of realism is needed for successful cultivation of these temperamental beauties, as Anna Pavord found from bitter experience

Camellias are like computers. If you create exactly the right programme, they will whire away with no problems. If there is a tiny maladjustment in the schedule, they go to pieces. After struggling for years to persuade them that they like my basically alkaline garden, I now grow a few in tubs and let the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew astound me with the rest.

The earliest outdoor varieties have anyway. been blooming for the past month between Kew. They have also been lighting up masses of town gardens, seeming to do particularly well in shady, rather dark basements. Camellias are seductive creatures. yourself a few important questions.

First of all: soil. Have you got what it takes to produce a healthy plant with shiny dark green foliage and plenty of flowers? Camellias like an acid soil between pH5 and and filling it with the best acid mixture I could make, that I could fool my camellias into thinking they were at home.

For a few years it worked, with the help of doses of Sequestrene. Then gradually they began to mope, until I dug them up and gave them to a friend with a classic piece of acid woodland. Lining the pit with through until late April. It is an upright and

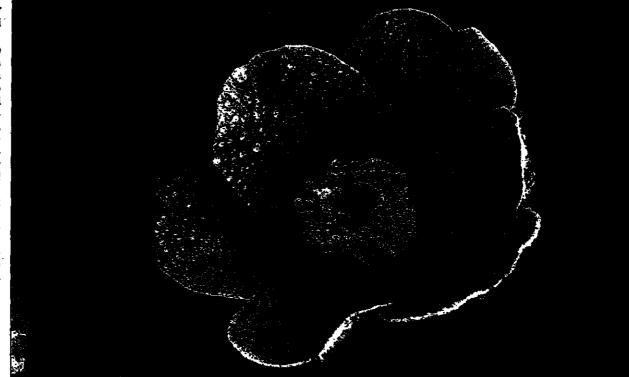
polythene may have put off the day of reckoning. The best camellia soils are not only acid, but also rich in humus. Leaf mould

The second big question is where to plant. In the wild, camellins grow under the protection of a high forest canopy, and the principle of sheltered shade is one to hang on to in the garden. They will stand up to an occasional gale, but hate contin-uous draughts. The soil needs to be moist, but not soggy. A north-facing wall, in a shel-tered countyard, will be ideal. Avoid a position, such as an east-facing wall, where early sun may catch frost-bound blooms and brown them off.

Having found the right spot, the next hurdle will be to select a variety that is more likely to thrive than not. Of the several thousand kinds available, more than half will be too tender to grow successfully outside in the UK. A different half have such violent colours that you would not want them

Generally, go for varieties of Camellia the Victoria Gate and the Lion Gate at x williamsii and Cjaponica. C sasanqua and C reticulata types will be better under glass. Then check flower types, sorted into groups such as single, semi-double, anemone form, full peony form and so on. but before you succumb completely, ask The more complicated sorts are unlikely to weather well outside. Whites are touchier than reds about frost, wind and wet. For real choice, go to a specialist nursery.

In the north of the country, tough C x williamsü types such as 'J C Williams' (single 6.5. I thought, by excavating a 4ft x 4ft pit pale pink) will be the safest choice. Other good ones are 'Brigadoon' (semi-double deep pink), the faithful 'Donation' (semidouble soft pink), Donation's daughter 'Rose Parade' (deep rose peony form) or 'St Ewe' (bright rose-pink single). 'Donation' is the most popular camellia in Britain, in flower from late February



'Leonard Messel' (deep pink, loose peony form) is another popular type, half C x williamsii, half the looser, laxer C reticulata.

A camellia stops growing around the end of July. It then settles to the business of producing flower buds - or not, as the case may be. This is a cause of great frustration to camellia owners. Dryness at the roots will certainly inhibit the process, and it is vital to keep camellias well watered between July and September. Too liberal

a hand with nitrogen feeds may also inhibit Kamel, born in 1661 in Brunn, central the production of flower buds.

Some varieties, such as 'Bow Bells' and 'Charity', are notably more free-flowering than others. Cx williamsii types are the most reliable, although some, such as 'Elsie Jury' and 'Fragrant Pink', need sun to set and ripen their flower buds. Varieties of Cjaponica may be shy to flower when young, but give a good display after four or five

happily without heat, though they will come into flower earlier if the temperature is kept at about 7-10°C (45-50°F). Collect rain water for them. The calcium in tap water is likely to upset them. Plants in pots should be moved outside between May and October. . If they are planted in a conservatory bor-

In conservatories, cameilias grow most

Photo: Howard Rice/Garden Picture Library

der, allow them to rest for about six weeks after flowering, without food or too much water. Then feed them with weak liquid fertiliser every two weeks until early August, and use the same routine for camellias growing in tubs outside. Sequestrene does not count as food; it is medicine. In open ground, scatter some dried blood round plants in April when the soil is damp, and nmich with pine needles, leaf mould or dead camellia flowers. Some swear by tea leaves. Tea bags look very drear, because the bag bit doesn't rot down.

If you have got the preliminaries right, aftercare will be minimal. Camellias don't need regular pruning, though you can snip off any lopsided shoots in February. Aphids and scale insects may cause sooty mould, which forms on the leaves under the places: where the dread pests are quartered. A pesticide will see off the bugs but you may need to wash the leaves, rubbing them gently with your thumbs, to get rid of the mould.

Czechoslovakia. He was a Jesuit priest and set up pharmacies for the Jesuits in several of their overseas outposts. Camellias first flowered in England in 1739, when two redflowered C japonica bloomed in the hothouse at Lord Petre's garden at Thorndon Hall in Essex. The hothouse treatment killed the plants, but fortunately not before the head gardener, James Gordon, had

taken cuttings and raised them in his Mile

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EXTERIOR

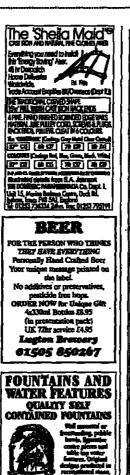


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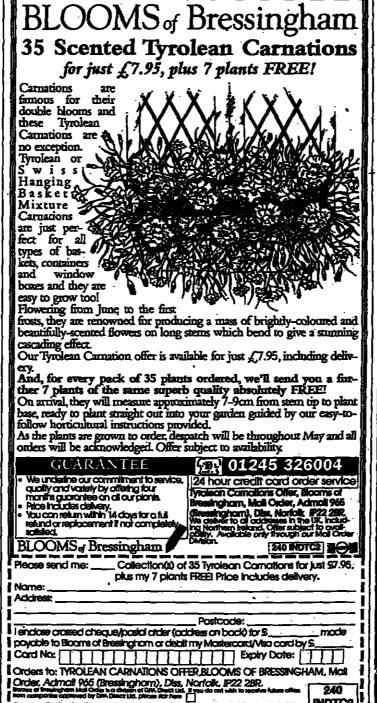
colourful flower beds and borders.

inexpensive way to bring height and shape to

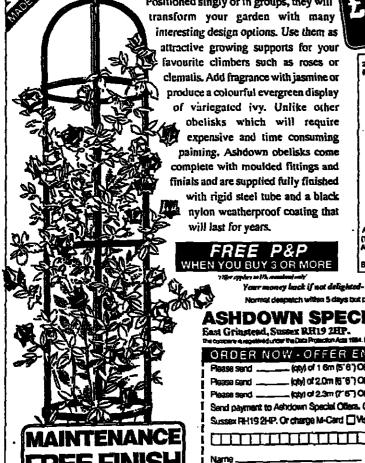
Positioned singly or in groups, they will

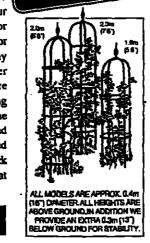










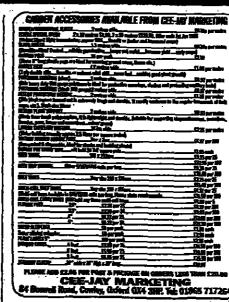


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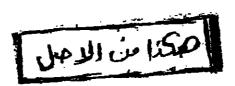
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See camellias at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Kew, open daily, 9.30am-4pm, admission £4.50; Anthony Woodland Garden, Torpoint, Comwall, open March-Oct Mon-Sat Ham-5.30pm and Sun 2pm-5.30pm, admission £2.50; The Pines, Salcombe, Devon, open tomorrow, Ilam-5pm, admission £2; The Magnolias, Brentwood, Essex, open Sun 29 Mar, 10am-5pm, admission £1.50; East Bergholt Place, East Bergholt, Suffolk open 29 March, 2pm-5.30pm, admission £2. National collections of camellias: Anthony House (see above); Mount Edgecumbe House, Cremyll, near Torpoint, Cornwall PLIO 1HZ (01752 822236). 20 species, 500 cultivars. Open daily.

Buy camelias at the Trehane Camellia Nursery, Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne, Dorset BN21 7NE (01202 873490) open daily, !0am-4.30pm; send £1.50 for mail order catalogue; Burncoose & Southdown Nurseries, Gwennap, Redruth, Comwall TR 6 6BJ (01209 861112) open Mon-Sat (8am-5pm), Sun, Ilam-5pm; send £1 for catalogue; Coghurst Nursery, Ivy House Lane, near Three Oaks, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 4NP (01424 756228), open Mon-Fri, 12-4.30pm, Sun lOam-4.30pm, send 2 x 2nd-class stamps for

catalogue. Read 'Gardening with Camellias' by New Zealand author Jim Rolfe (Godwit, £25).

Join the International Camellia Society: UK representative Mr HC Short, 41 Galveston Road, East Putney, London SVV 15 2RZ (0181-870) 6884).

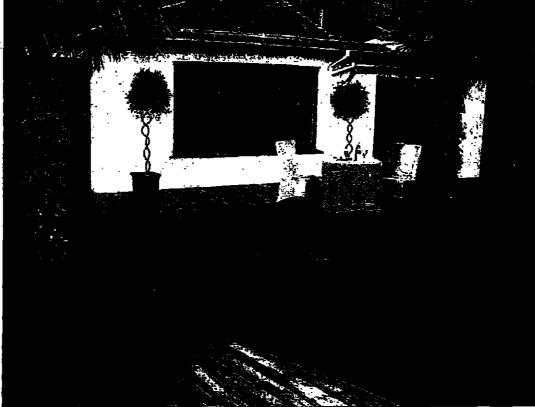
CUTTINGS

April courses at the English Gardening School include one-day sessions on "the Mixed Border" (16 April, Nada Jennett) and "Scent and its hapact in the Garden" (23 April, Phillip Harkness and Stephen Lacey). For more information contact the school at the Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS (0171-352 4347).

A superb stone pine, Pinus pinea, growing in Maids of Honour Row, Richmond Green, has recently been designated as one of the great trees of London. An initiative launched jointly by the London Tree Forum and the Countryside Commission aims to mark the city's best trees with a commemorative green plaque. To nominate a tree for the scheme, contact the tree officer at your local authority. For a leaflet explaining more about the project, write to the London Tree Forum, PO Box 15146, London WC2B 6SJ.

The Alpine Garden Society is holding a show today (12pm-4.30pm) at the Burleigh Community College, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, admission £1. Look out for primulas, cyclamens, sax-ifrages, orchids, dwarf narcissus, fritillaries, sempervivums and ferns.

For bridging awkward gaps, providing a smooth cover over uneven surfaces in the garden, timber decks southern pine, a honey-coloured advise on installing decks to order. (0181-878 7887).



slope into an extra outdoor living for their free Decking Projects timber, fixings, screws and nails. For space. They can be cut round trees; Book, which has plans and advice details contact the Outdoor Deck they can be bent round corners. The on construction. The company can Outdoor Deck Company uses also arrange site surveys, and will Sheen Lane, London SW14 SLP

are friendly and adaptable. Using timber imported from the US (see Prices start at around £500 for a a deck, you can convert a steep picture). DIY enthusiasts can send deck 8ft x 12ft; the price includes

Company, Mortimer House, 46

Mothers Day Gifts

WEEKEND WORK

Having pruned your jasmine, buddleia, climbing roses, dogwoods and late-flowering clematis (*The Independent*, 21 Febmary), turn your attention to the wisteria. This should have been half-pruned last summer, when any growths that you did not want to tie in should have been cut back by half. Now it is time to finish the job. Cut back all spare tendrils, leaving only two pairs of buds at the base of the new growth. Without this severe priming, wisteria is apt to get stuck in leafing mode.

Mulch the ground where lily of the valley and Solomon's seal grow, with well-rotted compost. This is more easily done before the new shoots are through the ground than afterwards. Mushroom compost, a by-product of the mushroomgrowing industry, is excellent for jobs such as this, and is friable

Prune and train ornamental vines such as Vitis coignetiae and 'Brant', growing on walk and pergolas. On pergolas, you can wrap the long growths round the poles, securing them with soft string. On walls, you should train out the growths so that they do not cross over each other, fixing the stems at intervals with galvanised vine eyes.

Hoe gently between rows of winter-planted garlic, to loosen soil that has got beaten down and sour during the heavy rain of the last couple of months. Do the same between early rows of broad beans. Feed if necessary, with an all-round fertiliser such as Growmore.

Sow seed of herbaceous perennials such as hipins, delphinium, statice, thalictrums, primroses (I've just sown an old-fashioned mix of primroses called 'Cottage Pastels'), violas and pansies.

Repot indoor plants such as asparagus fern, aspidistra, and succulents of all kinds, giving them, if possible, a pot one size larger than the one they were previously growing in.

Mothers Day Gifts

Anna Pavord

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Poetry Competitions £12,000.00 Prize Money to be Won

The International Library of Poetry has just announced that it is spousoring an International Amateur Poetry Competition in the United Kingdom and Ireland. There will be eight competitions this year open to all amateur poets. Entry to the competitions is free and there is no purchase requirement to win one of 70 prizes, including a £1,000.00 Grand Prize.

How to Enter Anyone may enter the competition simply by sending in only one original poem, any subject, any style, to: The International Library of Poetry Dept. 91813

FREEPOST LON 2229 Kent ME10 3BR (No stamp required) note this address is for poe

ries must be sout to the address below) The poem should be no more than my lines, must be typed or neatly printed, and the poets name and address must appear at the top of the page. Poems must Jewels of the Imagination, among others. be the original work of the submitting author and will not be returned. All who enter will receive an acknowledgement, along with complete competition rules, within approximately nine weeks.

artistic expression. In addition to the months they will award £12,000.00 in cash £1,000,00 Grand Prize, ten Second Prizes of prizes in the UK and Ireland competitions £50.00 each and 59 Third Prize gifts with a alone. £28.00 value will also be awarded. All 70 edition through their purchase of a copy competition."

For further information and to movine a copy of the rules, send a self-addresso. The International Library of Poerry, FAO: Competition Rules. 4 Cremers Road, Dolphin Park, Stiffingbourne, Kent ME10 3HB

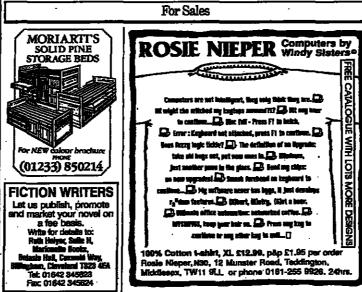


Featured above are some of The

available). Every poem remains the exclusive property of its author. Anthologies published by the organisation include: A Lasting Calm, Awaken to a Dream, and

World's Largest Poetry Organisation The International Library of Poetry, the international affiliate of The National Library of Poetry (founded in the United States in 1987 to promote the work and achievements of contemporary poets), publishes poetry and sponsors competitions All the poems entered into the around the world. In recent years they have competition will be judged on originality, awarded prize money to more than 5,000 use of language, poetic style, creativity, and poets in over 60 countries. In the next 12

"It's always exciting to discover new prize winners will be featured in a beautiful, talent," stated Howard Ely, Managing Editor nardbound anthology to be published at the of The International Library of Poetry. conclusion of the competition. And what's "We're especially interested in poems from more, non-winners may guarantee new or unpublished poets. I urge everyone publication of their poem in this beautiful who is interested in poetry to enter this





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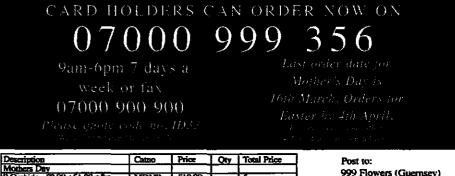
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For Sales

Plum for it

A taste of ... prunes from Agen in south-western France. Nikki Spencer samples the finest of dried fruit

In Britain we may regard prunes as mildly amusing, conjuring up images of tweed-clad schoolmistresses keeping themselves regular. In France, however, they take their prunes seriously. So seriously, that in the Lot valley in the heart of Gascony, where they claim they grow the finest prunes in the world, they have a museum dedicated solely to the dried fruit.



Visitors to the Prune Museum in the small village of Granges sur Lot can trace the history of prune-making in the region from the Crusades to the present day, and sample prunes dipped in everything you can think of - including brandy, honey and chocolate.

Towards the end of August the region takes on a purple haze, as the plums ripen and the air is filled with the smell of "cooking" prunes.

Picking is carried out by means of a slightly Heath Robinson method, A sort of tractor with large pincers grabs the trees around their trunks and vibrates them so that a shower of fruit rains down on the ground into large, inverted umbrellas

One story goes that prior to mechanisation in California - where prune trees were taken in 1865, and where they now supply 74 per cent of of bringing 500 monkeys from Panama to pick onion pizza.

the plums, only to find that they are the fruit as fast as they picked it.

Once the fruit has been harvested, turning a plum into a prune is a special skill. It's not just a question of debydration, but of cooking the fruit for about 24 hours at such a temperature that it remains succulent and moist, then storing it in wooden boxes for two months so that the prunes gain their deep black colour.

The prunes that many of us were forced to eat as children were usually tinned, or pretty tough and chewy, but modern technology makes it possible for the modern prune to be eaten or used in recipes straight from the packet or the jar, rather than needing to be soaked or drained. And even in the UK we are catching on to the idea. Sales of prunes, particularly from France, have trebled in the last year, according to the supermarket chain J Sainsbury.

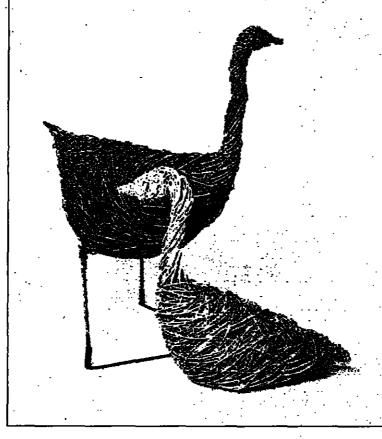
The Prune Museum in Granges sur Lot is about 30 minutes' drive from the bustling port of Agen. It is open all year, except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Entrance costs 10F for adults, and is free for children under 10. By prior arrangement the museum will arrange tours of the surrounding farms and orchards. (0033 5 53 84 00 69)

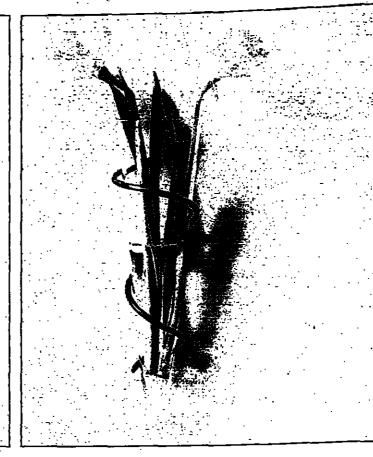
·King Henry VIII served prunes as a starter at all his state banquets.

•In Japan prune paste is sold door to door, and is consumed by the teaspoonful as a skin and hair. Unlikely but true: mail-order cata- half years ago by Erica Wolfe-Murray. opened a small shop about 18 months

During the 19th century young ladies were advised to practise saying phrases and words beginning with "P" as an aid to gaining an attractively shaped mouth. A popular phrase, mentioned in Charles Dickens's Little Dorrit, was "prunes and prisms".

The California Prune Board, which has declared next week National Prune Week, claims that, as well as being a healthy snack, prunes combined with plenty of fluids can reduce hangover blues. With the endorsement of the Californian model Caprice and the former Baywatch actress Alexandra Paul, the board will be encouraging us to sample dishes such as apthe prune market - one grower hit on the idea ple and prune strudel, and savoury prune and





Catalogue of simplicity

The stuff of ... natural style. Modern classics by post

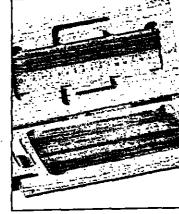
logues need not cause groans of incredulity at the host of bizarre objects you never knew you couldn't live withthe pages of Touch Design's brochure. This is heaven for anyone in search of that elusive special present, neat storage unit or garden accessory. Here quality and real originality are the hallmarks. Garden willow sculptures (£180); glass trays (from £69.50); linen cushions (£29.25) - you'll find yourself hard out most of the goods that have been so carefully selected.

"It was at a time when most mail-order catalogues were full of imported things - usually fairly shabby stuff, and out. Not, at least, if you look through much of it plastic," she says. "So I decided to get together a selection of goods made from natural materials and in simple shapes - sort of classics, that will go on and on."

Where possible the items are handmade, mostly in Britain, and nearly all personally known to Erica. She and her not to have a sudden, aching need for team of two others design about 70 per cent of the products, and they run the packaging and postage side of the busi-

ago. "This has been enormous fun," Erica enthuses. "Customers now tend to bring things in to show us and say, 'Have you ever thought about this?' It's really rewarding talking to them, and realising that there are an increasing number of people who very much appreciate uncomplicated goods that are well made and simply designed."

the suppliers are craftspeople who are To order a catalogue from Touch Design, call 01725 552888 or fax 01725 552605; Touch Design's shop at 51 High Street, Sixpenny Handley, near Salisbury, Wiltshire, is open every morning Monday to Satur-The company is a small, family ness from the West Country village of day and in the afternoon on Tuesday, concern that was started three-and-a- Sixpenny Handley. Here they also Thursday, Friday and Saturday.



wough a mought!)

Well crafted: top left, willow geese garden sculptures by Serena de la Hey, £180 each; top, wall-mounted cone vase £28.75; above, cedarwood pencil box £18.25

GAMES

Every day you may read a new survey telling you what percentage of which group does what to whom how often. To make all such future surveys superfluous, here is a percentage table, all from the last 12 months. The sample population is British unless otherwise stated.

99% of Britons watch television. 98% think contraception should remain free on

97% of nurses believe there are staff shortages in their hospitals.

96% of casualty nurses have been verbally abused. 95% of railway stations have no nappy-changing or breast-feeding facilities.

94% of executives say they usually finish a business trip with a sense of accomplishment. 93% of GPs say a new bed can ease back pain. 92% of teenage girls in Middlesex tidy their

rooms at least once a week. 91% adults would never agree to wife-swapping 90% of football fans think the game would benefit from professional referees.

89% think the Millennium Dome is a waste of money. 88% of women say they would not fuss about

their appearance before appearing on TV. 87% of the French think Britain is improving. 86% think sight is the sense we most fear losing. 85% would back a reduction in the drink-drive

84% of bishops can name at least one Spice Girl. 83% of us spend Christmas with our families. 82% of Britons have never heard of Lionel

Jospin, the French prime minister.

a woman's responsibility. 80% of trains have no nappy-changing facilities. 79% of us felt the coverage of Diana's death v

sensitive. 78% of car-crimes are thefts from the vehicle. 71% of parents are unhappy with the train service.

informed about current affairs. 75% of working children are employed illegally. 74% of hospital doctors do not expect the NHS

to exist in 50 years. 73% of fishermen think hunting should be illegal.

or less.

70% of football fans say statistical analysis

81% of women think that contraception is mainly

76% of Americans think the British are well-

72% of teenagers tidy their rooms once a month 71% of adults think young offenders are let off too lightly.

STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT WILLIAM HARTSTON

enhances their enjoyment of the game. 69% of wine is bought in supermarkets. 67% of Yorkshire women are still waiting for the sex of their dreams

66% of women do not feel confident naked 65% of people hate junk mail 65% of 35- to-45-year-olds are more financially content than they were in their 20s.

64% of high-achieving women who have had an affair have not regretted it. 63% of victims of car crime are aged 25 to 35.

62% of people biame themselves for marital rows. 61% of men think think contraception is mainly a woman's responsibility.

60% of shoppers say they try to buy British. 59% think big businesses exploits the work force. 58% pay cash for Christmas shopping. 57% of men aged 20-24 have taken illegal drugs.

56% of men in Scotland are too fat. 55% disapprove of banning beef on the bone. 54% back a smoking ban in all public places.

53% want to ban all forms of tobacco sponsorship. 52% of over-50s have life insurance. 51% plan to organise a party for the millennium.

50% of women think they are overweight. 49% of 18-24 year-olds would like to go abroad for Christmas.

48% of teenagers smoke or have tried it. 47% of Scottish women think they are too fat. 46% of 8-to-16-year-olds can't find London in a

45% of the total workforce are women. 44% of women feel stressed. 43% of women aged 20-24 have taken drugs. 42% of women high-achievers admit to having

had an extra-marital affair. 41% of people over 55 consider themselves lucky. 40% of raw meat sales are chicken. 39% of people touch wood for luck.

38% have not had an eve test in the last two years. 37% think walking under ladders is unlucky. 36% of us made a New Year's resolution.

35% of couples argue more than once a week. 34% of nurses have been attacked while on duty. 33% of households play the midweek lottery. 32% of women high-achievers have no children. 31% are planning to go to a millennium party.

30% of cars in Barnsley are red. 29% of adults have taken a short break holiday. 28% of households are of one person only.

27% of mothers have an epidural anaesthetic. 26% of marital rows take place in the evenings. 25% of women say they think about sex daily. 24% of women think they are not attractive.

23% of executives think new technology has made life more stressful.

22% of women in the Midlands have grey hair. 21% of men would pay £1,000 to set Melinda Messenger free if she were kidnapped. 20% of women say their sex life is fantastic.

19% of us start Christmas shopping in October. 18% vote the Scottish accent their favourite. 17% of New Year's resolutions last less than a day. 16% of men are obese.

15% of the UK population are over 65. 14% do not eat red meat.

13% of breath tests for alcohol are positive. 12% of teenagers' bedrooms have a computer.

11% of Britons say they don't like Germans. 10% of male workers have a female boss. 9% of GP consultations are in the patient's home.

8% of companies are staffed on Christmas Day. 7% of vicars do not have television sets. 6% of cars in Chelsea are Mercedes.

5% of bathroom buyers opt for a bidet. 4% of adults belong to a political party.

3% of consumers do not celebrate Christmas. 2% of executives have returned from a business

trip to find they have been sacked.

1% of us made a New Year's resolution to keep a

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Marguerite Wolff, concert pianist.

My brother tells people that I play all day, which is of course irrefutable. As a concert pianist, one works enormously hard and practises many hours

My athletic life has always been very limited. I longed to be an elegant tennis player, but of course tennis is tremendously bad for the arm muscles, and skiing is impossible because you can't afford to break anything: it's never the same again, however well it mends. It can make all the difference in the world if you have a break. I think Somerset Maugham wrote a story about somebody who wanted to be a concert planist. But they lost the tip of their little finger - just the very tip - which made everything impossible.

I had to play tremendously safe with a lot of physical things. I was allowed a rather genteel game of netball, or a little bit of rounders, and that was it. Part of a game after all is the risk you take, isn't it?

If you start playing very young, there's no question about it, you can get wonderful rewards. At times with an orchestra, you can go as near to heaven as you can on this earth, but against that, you give up a tremendous amount of lovely, ordinary things.

I remember as a child preparing to play a concert. I was about 15, and I'd just been to my piano teacher, who was quite a tyrannical sort of person. It was a hot day and as I stood waiting at the number 31 bus stop, I remember seeing some girls just sauntering along with their tennis rackets. They were obviously having a lovely time without any particular responsibilities or cares, which made

me very wistful. I still feel it quite strongly at the number 31 bus stop at Kilburn Bridge.

Marguerite Wolff's biography, "The Adventures of a Concert Pianist" is out of print, but determined individuals can follow her progress in Brazil en route to Miami for her 1998 concert series with the National Symphony Orchestra.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3558 Saturday 14 March DOWN

ACROSS

Type of nut (5) Mix cards (7) Smoker's requisite (7) US state (5)

Bird of prey (6) It's a deal! (4) 22 Come to appreciate (7) 24 Thespian (5)

Kingly (5)
Set of infant's clothes (7)
Mislay (4)
Put in suitcase (6) 26 Very light brown (5) 27 Issue (7) 28 Passivity (7) 29 Solids left in cup (5)

Supporter of mine? (3-4) Taxi driver (5) Headlamp housing (7) Grimaces (6) Oneness (5) Blandish (7)

Run off together (5) 12 Long period of time (4) 14 Chances (4) 16 Communion vessel (7) 18 Gull or albatross, e.g. (7) 19 Items of male underwear

(1-6) 21 Accumulation of fluid (6) 22 Religious teacher (5) 25 String (5)

Selution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Arm. 3 Money (Harmony), 7 Uprising, 8 Tsar, 9 Anthenticate, 10 Edible, 12 Budget, 14 Carving knife, 18 Urdu, 19 Pardoned, 20 Decay, 21 Yet. DOWN: 1 Applaud, 2 Moist, 3 Might, 4 Nonced, 5 Yeast, 6 Bireme, 11 Bivouac, 12 Bakery, 13 Everest, 15 Acrid, 16 Nippy, 17 Irony.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Love all; dealer South North ♠AQ2 ØΚ **♦**K762 AKQJ10 **∳**J 10 8 **◆**K976 ♥QJ1086 ♥J5432 **♦AJ3** О попе **\$**53 **49876** South **∳**543 ØA9 **♦Q109854 4**42

A number of old favourites are being republished under the Batsford banner. One such is Masters and Monsters by the late Victor Mollo.

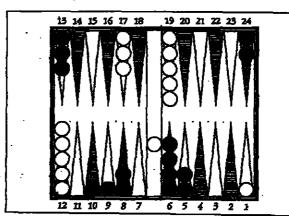
This deal from the book has a curiously simple point. During an exchange of hard luck stories, Karapet (the unluckiest player of all time) described how, after reaching Five Diamonds and getting a

heart lead, he "knew" that he was going down. As he explained: "The contract is unbreakable unless the trumps are 3-0 and then only if East has the void and also SK. And even then you are still home as long as West has three clubs. The odds against everything being wrong must be at least 30:1 and ...*

He was interrupted by the Hideous Hog who explained that it was not an unlucky hand at all, for he had been fortunate enough to escape a spade lead. After the actual heart lead, the contract was virtually 100 per cent.

Can you see the point that the Hog was making? The secret of the play lies in overtaking the king of hearts with the ace at trick one! Then you lead the ten of diamonds and run it if West plays low. Even if this loses to the singleton jack, East will not be able to attack spades from his side of the table, and the losers are restricted to at most two trump tricks.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



The most difficult question of all: when should you double? The answer would fill a book but let's try to establish some guidelines. First, in terms of game-winning chances it is normally reckoned that somewhere between 67 per cent and 75 per cent is correct. Of course you may not be good at estimating percentages but just ask yourself this: If I had this position 100 times would I be confident of winning at least two games out of every three or possibly even three out of four? If the answer is yes then you should consider doubling.

Second, you should consider how the game might change over the next two rolls. If after your roll and that of your opponent you think he will still have a take, then it is normally correct to wait. If, however, there is a very good chance that he

would have to drop, then again you should consider doubling. Third, never forget you are playing another human being. How will your opponent react to a double? Does he take any double offered? Or does he drop lots of doubles quickly? You must adapt your cube-handling depending upon who you are playing. Knowing your opponent well is a key element to good

Finally, there is the position itself. The three elements I normally consider are the race, the structure and threats. If you are better in two out of three of these you should normally be considering doubling. Look at the position above. Black opened with a 31 making his 5-point. White rolled 63 and played 24/15 and then Black rolled 43 and played 13/10*, 13/9. White rolled 65 and stayed on the bar. Black now has a very good early-game double. He is ahead in the race, has the better structure and some very real threats. In fact despite this being only the third move of a game White can only just take this double.

13/INDOOR



Through a glass brightly

Making it using a mix of modern and medieval traditions, Sally Staples learns how to create stained-glass windows

Aust as children like to take a painting home commissions, and also teaches oil painting. learn a new craft want to be able to produce a piece of handiwork after a minimal amount of instruction. And one of the pleasures of learning to make stamed-glass windows is that you can do just that. After only of glass, and then I tell them to go away ley Concourse, a residential adult educabiology teacher, had completed a 10-inful abstract design. The cost of materials by me. was just £8.

who gets someone in to paint the walls has a workshop so I decided to find a hobby, and wanted to give stained glass a try.

मेंद्रे के अपने करियों अस्ति करियों का स्टूब

Service Se : Her pres

gram is gramate michael ferfes.

markably easy. The most important are shaping their designs. thing seems to me to start off your design with an accurate drawing."

from school, most adults who decide to She whizzes round her class of 12 students - men and women of all ages - allowing them to work at their own pace.

"The course is four days, and I start by giving them an idea about the history a day and a half of basic tuition at Earn- and doodle on a pad until they come up with a design they like. Some people nattion college in West Sussex, John Reed, a urally prefer an abstract picture; others want a design that looks like the object square stained-glass window with a colour- it is meant to be. Both approaches are fine

"If a student wants to do a recognisable "I'm totally impractical - the sort of man flower in a pot, I will show them how you can stylise the design and get the right and I have no background in anything artis- colours to form a suitable background. If tic," says John. "I'm buying a cottage that you use too many reds and blues and heraldic colours it can detract from the main picture, so I talk to the students about the "Tve never cut glass before; it really is textures and shades of colours when they

The tutor is Annie Goodman, who has again, the second drawing being the "car- have a holiday all at the same time." worked ou large-scale church window toon". It is on this that the glass shapes will Each piece of glass is placed over the



Glass distinction: however simple the design, it is essential to start with an accurately drawn plan

be cut. Then the fun starts. Annie provides several bucketfuls of glass pieces of all sizes, shapes, textures and colours. Each student is supplied with the basic tools: a simple glass-cutter, pair of pliers, an old kitchen knife, a sharp lead-cutting knife, a brush, a lump of tallow candle, strips of lead in two thicknesses, and solder.

Angela Morris, who has come all the way from Alderney to spend a holiday where she could also learn a craft, has sensibly chosen a simple design of sun rays. "I thought it would take weeks to produce a window, but once you are taught the technique of cutting glass you can make good progress," she says. "The nice thing about Once the design has been finalised, it a residential course like this is that you can is enlarged to a 10-in square, then drawn make friends, learn something new and

relevant section of the design and held in sure that windows are rattle proof. place with horseshoe nails, then a glasscutter is run round the outline, just as in tracing. Different thicknesses of glass and varying textures require different pressure when cutting.

Once all the glass pieces have been cut, the lead strip is cut to frame the design and to secure each piece of glass. The lead is malleable, and surprisingly easy to cut. When all the lead and glass pieces are in place, the joining-points are brushed and scraped with tallow: "a medieval tradition which helps the melted solder to spread over the joint," says Annie.

Then the solder iron is heated and used to melt small amounts of solder over the lead joints. Once the soldering on both sides of the window is complete, Annie demonstrates the final touch to en- age in glass. He and his wife Gisela, also obtained from local education authorities.

Rolling up her sleeves, she dips her hand into a pot of black grouting cement made up of linseed oil, white spirit, black paint and whiting. This is the messy bit, but a request to use rubber gloves from a faintheart at the back of the class is firmly refused.

The liquid cement is rubbed with a finger under each piece of lead to eliminate any cracks. This is done on both sides of the window, which should then be wiped thoroughly with newspaper. It will take a few days for the cement to set hard.

Dr Sydney Aynsworth, from Gosport, had been stuck on ideas for a design but was inspired by a picture on TV of a road flashing Balisha beacon in the foreground

on the course, are hoping to insert their windows into fanlights at home.

Other students were working on stainedglass panels with house numbers, and Pamela Wilks, from Emsworth in Hampshire, had designed a brightly coloured clown which she planned to hang against a large picture window in her house to deter birds from trying to fly through the glass.

A four-day residential course at Earnley Concourse, Earnley, Chichester, West Sussex P020 7JL (01243 670392) costs £218 for full board and all the college's facilities including swimming pool. Non-residents pay £144. Annie Goodman teaches similar courses at winding away into the distance and a The Old Rectory, Fittleworth, near Pulborough in Sussex (01798 865306). Further in-- and has managed to reproduce the im- formation on stained glass classes can be

Tailor-made in wood

Flat-packs, DIY – forget it. Commission a cabinet for a perfect fit. Rhiannon Batten finds the man for the job

of the stand-up comic in need of material, or simply want to replace that maddening self-assembly wardrobe whose doors have never quite meet, you could well be hitting the highstreet furniture stores today. But finding something to fit that tricky alcove precisely could be a square peg/round hole scenario that you could well do without. Fortunately, custom-made furniture need not come with a dizzyingły exclusive price tag.

Believing that a gap existed in the market for bespoke furniture, Andrew Stanley began woodworking business in London's East End in 1989. The it had been stolen. Of course, prices are serious - recent commissions include an oak bookcase, at £2,100, double wardrobe in English oak, at £2,400, and a maple sittingroom unit for £3,400 - but the absence of high overheads and store rentals means that they bear comparison with off-the-

chosen materials as well as size and fitting

leagues are as concerned with the pleasure of working with wood as with turning a profit, they will take on almost anything. "We even made a bath and hand-basin out of teak last year. It was, in fact, a great success," he says. "Much of our work is undertaken for architects. I suppose the most eccentric architect's commission we've had recently was replacing a classical column on the exterior of a bouse; somehow, we also work direct for retail customers, and we keep our costs down because pieces are sold direct to the customer rather than through a shop."

When a customer comes to a bespoke furniture maker, the company will discuss a design and then produce an illustration

stripped-pine afficionado beloved a degree of control: specific I'll do a final drawing," says Mr niture; this has become some- scope and style. Walking around functionality of it all; it's essential to get right details of quirement of clients. Since Mr Stanley and his colthings such as drawers." This is partly because there is precious little room for error. The cost of raw materials is about onethird of the price of the finished product. For some woods, such as teak, and for sprayed, pigmented lacquer finishes, the cost can be even higher.

From agreement of the plan to completion of the commission will take about eight weeks, depending on materials and labour. Some self-assembly wardrobes seem to take that long. Andrew Stanley himself

started working life as an accountant, but found creative carpentry more to his liking. One of his first orders in those early years was for a set of 66 leather and oak chairs to be installed in the Great Hall of Lincoln's Inn in central London. The work was produced to

Whether you are the sort of peg prices. Furthermore, you get and an estimate. "On approval, match the original period fur-pieces vary enormously in both company's, and is often a re-

> The Nineties have brought their own problems to be solved. Mr Stanley says that much thought has to be given to work such as disguising computer trunking behind Gothic panels, and building secret panels into furniture. It is this variety, he adds, that is one of the main joys of his job - he relishes the prospect of a challenge.

> Producing similar pieces of furniture time after time is a less attractive option for Mr Stanley than, for example, time spent puzzling over a job for the cloakrooms of the Middle Temple, in the legal hub of the cap-ital. The difficulty to be grappled with here was the designer's vision of suspended timber shapes supported by glass and steel -"it was intriguing to implement

this," says Mr Stanley.

likely to come across solid, elegant and understated shelving units for a modern warehouse

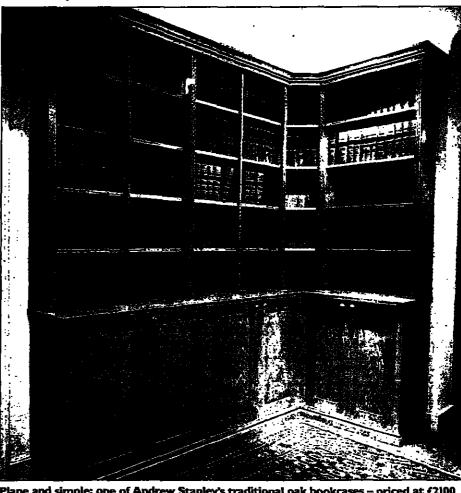
conversion as you are to find the flamboyant excesses of a ceremonial table inlaid with solid silver. Much of the work revolves around cabinet-making but orders can also consist of more mundane window frames, doors and cupboards. Mr Stanley is keen to point out his tradesmanlike approach, whereby pieces are primarily functional rather than artistic. "Without imposing on a client's taste, I try to guide the non expert towards designs I know from experience will work and will suit the build-

> Andrew Stanley Woodworking is at 6A King's Yard, off Carpenter's Road, London E15 2HD (tele-

that's no problem.

ing," says Mr Stanley. But if you

insist upon stripped pine -



The company's finished phone and fax: 0181-533 6199). Plane and simple: one of Andrew Stanley's traditional oak bookcases - priced at £2100

DON'T MISS TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

TRAVEL

WALK THE EARTH

Hiking, trekking, scrambling. From the Pennines to Crete

plus

A short stay in Istanbul





PORM GUIDE

COUNTRY BEAU is a dual winner on the course and sure to like this longer trip having started off in bumpers (wins at Kempton and Newbury). The flat 8th has to be defied but what beats this talensed golding is the winner on the evidence of his impressive first win here from Skycab and Bracey Run. Richard Durwoody again takes the ride and he stays with him instead of Monttone, twice a winner with Durwoody since a titth to Country Seau here for which he is allowed 6th for the 14-length beating. Red Curate makes no appeal, but Recloadall can be considered if he stays because he referred in hunting-don form with the useful Decoupage when changed front-running tacics were employed at Bangor. From the stable that won with The Proms on the course yesterday, Redesthall is a leading contender at the veights. Cliation is a decent act, who best Mountain Storm at Kempton and he's back from a rest after facing a stiff test when fifth to Dawn Leader at Chelterham. The stables hortees run well when fresh so Cinton is in with a shout. Notey Mitner is to good to discount, but Ardent Sout is against better horses compared to Wetnerby on Boding Day. Master Piligrim and Jet Files have to improve on their form here betund Bold Classic, while Stiffwries is from a yeard struggling for winners. Jessalos One has faced two desay openings at Carterick.

Selection: COUNTRY SEAU SUNDERLANDS IMPERIAL CUP HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £30,000 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £21,495 Royal bias disc, royal bias sleaves, white armiels, light bias and white hooped cap HOUSE OF DREAMS (28) (D) (J. & M Leisure Ltd.) G M Mocre 6 10 7 —11 declared —
Mineroum weight: 10st 7tb. True h cap weights. Abyosots 10st 3tb, Adiov 10st 1tb, Western Chaf 9st 13tb.
BETTING: 3-1 Sersum Corde, 7-2 Pher From Parmy, 4-1 Mrs Em, 6-1 Eriting, 10-1 Bad Bertrich,
Thunderpolet, Magical Blow, 12-1 Isla Dawn, 14-1 Myostis, Adilov, 16-1 Western Chief
1997 Jone King 5 1t 3 Capt D Alexa-Harkey (7) 7-2 (7) Bucklar) 6 ran Pupile, white seams and star on cap 11 0-1223 REGENCY RAKE (72) (D BF) (Mrs.J.J.McGettigan) A L.T.Mccore (tr), 6 10 5..., F.M. Berry (S) MRS EM has shown a marked preference for faster ground but the mare is lended to have the pace to beat these in the hands of the capable Dominic Alers-Hankey eiter the tasest decent second to Never in Debt at Taunton. Sursum Corda and Pher From Puntests decent second to Never in Debt at Taunton. Surgrum Consults with Mard Thomas is aboard Surgrum Conde, who has top form over longer trips and now in his first handicap. He would probably have beaten Good Lord Murphy at Warwick but for tipping up two out so so his chance must be respected even if the trip is on the short side for him. Phar From Funny is with Ollie Blwood, and a fifth to Dines at Wincanton in January was a promising effort. He never won when lightly-raced last season but rates an obvious threat if anywhere near back to his best. Eriting, an unflucky loser when a lest-flight taller at Antree in November, was a fair second to course specialist Tickerty's Gift at Lingfield last Selection: MRS EM Gold, royal blue stay; check cap 14 631 HOH EXPRESS (36) (D) (Palam Synchosis Ltd) Mrs J Remoden 6 10 2 ... Royal blue, white stay; knopen slasever, questioned cap 15 01211. SADLER'S REALM (72) (D) (8 D Racing) P Hobbs 5 10 1 Royal blue and white (instead), white shares, royal blue seams, red and white check cap

15 declared —

8ETTING: 5-1 Blowing Wind, 5-1 Nordance Prince, 7-1 Hot Express, 8-1 Alabang, 10-1 Regency

Raise, Richhattunish, Nebrawali, 12-1 Sadjer's Resent, 14-1 Seams, House Of Oreans, Debutante

Daya, Kingstold Pet, 20-1 Star Selection, 25-1 Danegold, 50-1 Silent Cracker

1997: Carlto Brigante 5 10 0 J Osborne 10-1 (P Webber) 15 ran

3.30 EBF 'NH' NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE FINAL C4 (CLASS A) £25,000 added 2m 4f 110yds £17,775

Hallow, siyal blue disc, shiped showes and cap NOISY MENIER (18) (0) (Men R.) Story D. Nacholson 6 11 4. Light blue and royal blue dischool sight blue disches and cap CLIMTON (82) (E N Tiscrass) K Balley 7 11 2.

Light green, purple chewrit, armiets and cap
TAKE COVER (22) (A ang M Bannet) M Tempaka 7 10 4
Grey Dabat dass, pay seband
CHARLEY LAMBERT (25) (D) (R M Michael O G Sande) J Macdo 7 10 5 ... E He

While, dark green triple dismond and dismond on a MONTROE (22) (CD) (Mas Menel Trincil A Rowe 6 11 2

Trible, green stipped steems, yellow cap

Filling, green stipped steems, yellow cap

Whee, black steems, reque steems, meune and white houped cap

Green, black steems, the transport black green to the property of the compact cap

Carpe, black openies, black and transport halved steems, black cap

Carpe, black openies, black and transport halved steems, black cap

To 2-2m JESSICA ONE (36) WH Streams on Min Reveiley 7 to 8

Royal black, mancar seek, light black steems, gift black and reproduct openies

To C3-4m NEVER IN DEST (23) (M R Couph A Hobics 8 to 6

Light green, coming capton, services, services and cap

Purple, and searce, subject op

14 2251 JOE BUZZ (28) (Lice Buzzer) F Murphy 8 10 2

Stack and white framed), black showes, white arrives, black
15 24063 CHURCHTOWN GLEN (45) (J. & C Tiplon) S Brockshow 6 10 1

Yellow, purple hoops, purple showes
19 153503 THE FILL MONTY (8) (The Nutry Partnership) C Boooks 8 10 1

Secretary of the Nutry Partnership C Boooks 8 10 1

cord and dismond on cap

FORM GUIDE

The one tanced to come off a fast pace to collect is HOH EXPRESS, a very tasty Flat hendicapper on his day when with lan Baking and a progressive type over hardes alter just three rurs. He duty took the easier opening at Museaburgh eiter Uttoxiber and Wetterby, and his turn of fact in the hands of Sanie Person has to be greatly respected off this feather weight. Mertin Pipe has been running Blowing William in some strong races. Het a winner in Piance but he will do well to with this under 11st 10b. Ante-pool support for Rubhahumieh is interesting. He ran with a big weight behind Dines at Wincardon last time and can be given a equeal, oil forly 10st 4th boday on his old winning form at Nembury. Alsebang did a strade better than Seremus and Nathrawed when second to Shahrur at Kempton after his third here to Major Jurde. Alabang, with his rock-notid form and with the ground looking oldsy for him, rates a sound sect-way bet. Nordance Prince in him form but he probably wants the ground to be taster, while House Of Dreams contribe have in top nick effect the win 4t Cestarick and Adrian Maguire is a cracking booking. Sadier's Realem would seem to lace a stem test in this grade, but his halder Regenory Raise was a soft-ground witner at Fairyhouse in November and less only 10st 5th. But the one most likely to hunt up Hot Express is Debutante Days, who won three times on the Fast last year. The mare wean't disgraced on two turk last most and, with Richard Dunwoody taking a rare ride for Hernitate Knight, Debutante Days is definitely in with a fine chance.

Salection: HOH EXPRESS. FORM GUIDE

PROPERTY OF STREET OF STRE 22-25P SHISH STAND (72) (D) (SF) (Paddy O'Donnell) F Morphy 8 10 18 ... Emeral green, while hoops and always, cauge cap

Emeral green, while hoops and always, cauge cap

24LB ELROGY (35) (D) (Notable Coope) R Rowe 5 10 13

Alexon, yellow amiles, quartered cap

4IP-P5 DENNER BAY (26) (33) (Si Nejson) J Gifford R 10 12

Block, not cheeron, hooped cap

504P PASHTO (197) (Reymond Rootl) N Hendesson Ti 10 11 Grey, pink epsulets, questioned cap IP-OP5 MONTECOT (FR) (SZ) (Sir Michael Connell) S Maitor 9 10 8.

5.15 HMS SANDOWN STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £1,445 (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty V

ELRS (The Chap Cuerne) L Wels 5 11 4

IRON HILL (Mrs. D M Lanes) P Hedgir 6 11 4

U.STICC ALONE (ST) (The Popper Parlmentar) D Nicholson 5 11 4

MONS WARRIOR (John Woods) N Babbage 5 11 4

40 (MRXSWOOD (22) (Harvey Spack) C Barwel 5 11 4

SANTABLESS (D S Amold 6 D J Goodman) M Puren 5 11 4

STEMARTS PRIDE (5 H Riley) S Booderlaw 5 11 4

STEMARTS PRIDE (5 H Riley) S Booderlaw 5 11 4

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STEMARTS PRIDE (5 H Riley) S Booderlaw 5 11 4

STEMARTS PRIDE (5 H Riley) S Booderlaw 5 11 5

MRZ MSS SWY (John Packett) J Gladd 4 37 10

AUST ZOLA (5 W Jones) M Saunders 4 10 5

D PASSWORD (16) (Mrs J S E Turney) M Saunders 4 10 5

D PASSWORD (16) (Mrs J S E Turney) M Saunders 4 10 5

D PASSWORD (16) (Mrs J S E Turney) M Saunders 4 10 5 R Massay (3)G Bradley

● John O'Shea may leave it until the eve of the race to book a jockey for Cheitenham Gold Cup contender Go Ballistic. But the trainer is refusing to panic at the lack of a definite rider for the gelding, fourth in the race last year. A new pilot could be needed as regular partner Mick Frizgerald has been claimed for Rough Quest in Thursday's contest. And Tony Dobbin, who steered the nine year-old to victory in last month's Jim Ford Chase at Wincanton is set to be on The Grey Monk. But O'Shea's assistant Eamon Redmond stressed: "We are not bothered about the jockey. "We won't know for definite who will ride until next Thesday or Wednesday but I am sure there will be plenty of other top jockeys available. We are very happy with Go Ballistic and we would be very pleased if the ground dries up a bit. If it was good going I see no reason why he shouldn't improve on last year." Go Ballistic is 25-1 for the Gold Cup with Ladbrokes.

2.45 CLIVE GRAHAM NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 3f 110yds

3.20 TOTE PLACEPOT HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) 25,500

_R Johnso

J Frost I

Punters' Guide

CHEPSTOW 1.15: Mon Amie has excellent crodentials and could defy a hike in the weights. Zander's chance is hard to assess after an absence of more than four months. Quistaquay performed badly when favourite at Fontwell three weeks ago. SIBERIAN MYSTIC has yet to show her best form in the mud but this grey mare, the race's youngest contestant, looks best.

1.45: Brave Highlander must carry 9lb more than his proper hand-icap mark, and the Josh Gifford stable is in the doldrums. The poor recent form of Jenny Pitman's yard could also count agains: Id-lot's Lady. Belmont King has yet to recapture last year's form. SAIL BY THE STARS is the salest bet.

2.15: Effectual's persistent tail-swishing, again evident in victory on soft ground at Doncaster last weekend, does not seem to affect his prowess. It is of concern, though, that the stable's conditional rider Shane Kelly cannot claim his 7lb allowance today. Tony McCoy is aboard SIMONS CASTLE, a Lingfield winner last month, and can make this count.

SANDOWN 2.55: SURSUM CORDA lacks the experience of many of his rivals but has put in solid performances, notably when third at Wawick last time. Mrs Em won four of her six completed starts over hurdles last season and has clear prospects.

3.30: The Sandown turf is often very holding at this time of year and sev-eral of today's fancied runners would not want any more rain. One

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

of them is Country Beau, who disappointed on soft going here in January. Red Curate carries the higgest burden in a highly competitive finat, but does have the assistance of nart 5lb claimer Seamus Durack. MASTER PILGRIM is an interesting contender now Toby Balding's yard seems to be hitting form.

4.05: Judging the ability of Blow-ing Wind is very difficult. He fin-ished alongside Champion Hurdle-class runners at Haydock in January but even Martin Pipe said he was flattered. Sadler's Realm likes the mud and will surely be challenging at the finish. An outsider worth each-way support. however, is STAR SELECTION. John Mackie's runner has made a quiet start over jumps but was de-cent on soft ground on the Flat.

4.40: EULOGY has thrown away winning chances because of dodgy jumping. Richard Dunwoody takes over today, however, and it is worth relying on his skills to get his mount into the winner's enclosure.

WOLVERHAMPTON 4.25: REFUSE TO LOSE, who turned a competitive-looking 1m handican into a procession when sailing home 7 lengths clear of Plan For Profit at Lingfield last time, re-mains on a fair handicap mark and can follow up. Guif Shaadi, who won in good style here lately, is the obvious danger.

Imperial C		_			_		-	95		9
Fate of the favourites:	1988	89	90	91 11	92	93	94 A	85	96 8	3
Winner's place in bettin			0	0_	<u> 2</u>	1	0		2_	
Starting prices:	10-1	3-1	20-1	16-1	8-2	6-4	33-1	6-1	5-1	10
Winning ages:	5	6	5	5_	7	6	В.	_5_	5_	
Winning weights:	10.11	100	10.13	105	104	100	11.7	102	108	_1
Profit or loss to £1 stal	te: Fav	ourite	s -£3.	50. Se	cend	Favor	rites_	-04.25		
Percentage of winners	placed	i ist	2nd o	3r <u>d</u> 1	n last	race:	60%			_
Shortest-priced winner	: Olym	pian 6	H4_099	(3)						_
Longest-priced winner:	Precio	us Bo	y 33-1	(1994)					•	
Top trainer: M Pipe - Tr			***	~_		000				_

First show

IN the 3.30 at Sandown, Churchtown Glen is a toppriced 20-1 with Coral and the Tote - Ladbrokes go 11-1 ~ while Joe Buzz is 14-1 with Ladbrokes - William Hill go 9-1. In the 4.05 at Sandown, Regency Rake is a top-priced 10-1 with William Hill - Ladbrokes offer just 7-1. In the 4.25 at Wolverhampton White Plains is 9-1 with Ladbrokes and the Tote -Coral go just 6-1.

lan Davies

San	dow	n 3.	30	
torse	C	<u> </u>	L	
Hed Curple .	6-1	6-1	5-1	11-2
Country Beau	6-1	7-1	6-1	8-1
deptros	7-1	<u>8-1</u>	7-1	8-1
lessica Ome	7-1	B-1	9-1	84
tackethell.	9-1	10-1	11-1	9-1
loe Suzz	19-1	9-1	14-1	10-1
lever in Debt	14-1	14-1	12-1	<u>12-1</u>
Ziritiri	17-1	18-1	12-1	14-1
Indent Scout	18-1	164	16-1	14-1
lester Pligrics	14-1	16-1	18-1	16-1
hedey Lambert	20-1	18-1	20-1	<u> 20 1</u>
Augusticant Gen	20-1	14-1	11-1	<u> 20 1</u>
laley Milner	20-1	18-1	· 16-1	<u> 20-1</u>
ir Bojungles	25-1	25-1	25-1	18-1
idheise	20-1	20-1	25 <u>-1</u>	25-1
ides Cover	25-1	<u> 20-1</u>	20-1	25-1
et Files	25-1	20-1	28-1	16-1
he Fall Monly	25-1	<u>25-1</u>	33-1	33-1

Mordance Prince	<u>8-1</u>	6-1	13-2	6-1
Hok Extreme	7-1	7-1	7-1	8-1
Rubbakusiah	7-1	7-1	8-1	7-1
Alabang	91	. 7-1	9-1	10-1
Regency Raise	8-1	10-1	7-1	8-1
Seder's Resign	11-1	9-1	9-1	" <u>B-1</u>
Debutante Days	14-1	14-1	12-1	14-1
Kingsloid Pet	12-1	14-1	11-1	B-1
Nebranii	21	12-1	14-7	14-1
Serecus	14-1	14-1	14-1	14-1
House Of Dreams	14-1	14-1	12-1	16-1
Ster Streetion	25-1	25-1	25-1	20-1
Demegald	25-1	28-1	40-1	33-1
Silent Creater	50-1	50-1	50-1	50-1
Each way, a que	ner/e	odds. p	bces 1,	23
C-Cord, H-William	m HLL	طها-،	des T-	Ϊde
		_		

Sandown 4.05

Blowing Wind 92 51 11-2 92

C H L

1

Wolver	ham	ptor	1 4.2	5
Horse	<u>C</u>	<u>H</u>	L	1
Gulf Statedi	11-2	11-2	5-1	5-1
Reluse To Lose	92	11-2	5-1	94
Feelk	n-2	6-1	5-1	11-2
Yarob	8-1	13-2	64	11-2
Walte Plaint	8-1	7-1	9-1	9-1
Westmen's Weigh	114	11-1	11-1	10-1
Just Loui	D-1	12-1	12-1	11-1
Crazy Chief	16- <u>1</u>	10-1	14-1	12-1
Hover Golf Glory	#-1	14-1	18-1	16-1
Urse Major	16-1	12-1	14-1	14-1
Threadmedie	16-1	16-1	18-1	16-1
Rambo Waltzer	14-1	12-1	12-1	20-1
Moreore Mr Micagu	25-1	25-1	16-1	25-1
Each wey, a B	h the o	stk da	ns 1.2	3

Results

Each wax a custor the colds, places 1, 2, 3, 4

C-Coral H-William Hill L-Latteches, T-Total

MARKET RASEN

* MARKET RASEN

1.50: 1. RAMBO TANGO (Gary Lyona)
16-1; 2. Chanamon Steck 4-1; 3. Dino's Mintral 11-2.9 ran, 9-4 tay Dutch Dyane (4th)
14. 2% (B Cambidge). Tota: £21/0; £32/0
£150. £230. DP: £8581 CSP: £7254. Those:
£368.8. Tic: £108.51.
2.25: 1. GOOL SPOT (R Johnson) 4-1;
2. Nethingriby 9-4 tary 3. Fair And Pancy 37-1,
5 ran, 14.7 (B Bridght). Take: £300; £150.
£150. DP: £400. CSP: £868,
3.00: 1. NICHOL. FIETY (AP MCCoy) 5-2,
2. Bernburgh Boy 7-2; 3. Torn Stak 5-8 tax
10 ran. 4, 914.10, M Tomploin). Total £330;
£140. £140. £100. DP: £200. CSP: £1048. Tics
£2.70. NP: Heritage.
3.30: 1. DAWN MISSION (t. Wyer) 8-1;
2. Prelude To Fanne 10-1; 3. Sigma Wireleast 1.1 on 2. 1 for the state of the stat 2. Prelude To Fame 10-1; 3. Si less 5-1.9 ran. 2-1 fev Pettaugh 5

3.30: 1. DAWN MISSION (I. Wyer) 8-1;
2. Preliude To Fame 10-1; 3. Sigma Wineless 5-1.9 ran. 2-1 few Petitaugh, 5.8 (T Eastwirty), Tota: E1980: E270, E330, E180. DF;
52540. CSF; E7757. Tricast: E40638. Tric.
14.00: 1. PUREVALUE (A Thornton) 3-1;
2. John Drumm 5-8 fex; 3. Limited Liphidy 16-1 floran. 23, 2.6 MW Pesistry), Tate: 9430; E120, E130, E330. CSF; E330.
Tric: \$42,40. MF; Balcony Boy.
4.40: 1. VITAL WITNESS (Mrs. F Needham) 11-8 fax; 2. Andormati 3-1; 3. Sparrow Fall 5-2, 5 ms. 6. 18. (D Ingle), Tota: 220; E150, E180. DF; E330. CSF; E370. MFs;
Seior Jan, Sunny Mount.
3.10: 1. BELISARIO (I. Wyer), 7-2; 2. Strong Arrow 5-1; 3. Roddens 19-2. 16 ms.
0-4 fax Into Bettle, 5. 7. (N Garham), Tota: CSSO; E190, E280, E200. DF; E2280. CSF; E2322. Tric: E3780. Quadpot: E180.
Placespot: E1830. Quadpot: E180. Placepot: £1880, Quedpot: £180. Place 6: £3838, Place 5: £120.

SANDOWN

SANDOWN

2.00: 1. ANDANTO (Durwoody) 8-11
fax; 2. Brownes HIE Let 20-1; 3. Kurniska
8-1.14 ran. 1½. 12 (Ludy Henrise). Toke: EID;
E1D, EASI, E-ELD CF: EED'O, CSF: E1898. Tho:
E157.
2.35: 1. MOUNTAIN PATH (M A Fizzgeraid) 3-1; 2. Knight's Crest 7-2; 3. Experence IV 10-1.7 ran. 5-2 fav Nosrhy'An Eye
(8th) 3. 1½. (A) Henderson). Toke: DAD; E170,
E300. DF: E830. CSF: E1216.
3.10: 1. SILVER STICK (Mr M Watson)
2-1; 2. Superior Finish 5-1; 3. Dank Honey 7-1. 15 ran. 11-30 fav Druids Brook (8th).
7. ok. (M W Esstaby). Toke: E1390; £230,
E170. £190. DF: £3850, CSF: £9469, Ticke
EXDBRO.
3.46: 1. GOOD LORD MURPHY (F)

ETOL EIGO DF: ESSIST CSF: ES46R Thic FORED.

3.45: 1. GOOD LORD MURPHY (F Durwoody) Ti-4: 2. Tom Tuller 10-1; 3. Sum Alvert 14: 19 ram. 5-2 fav Kingts Bankar (Fel). 12: 8. (P Hobbs). Tota: E270; E130, E270; E300. DF: 1936. C5F: 22576. Thic: ESE0. 4 HE. Morgans HE.

4.16: 1. BRAES OF MAR (Mejor O El-wood) 6-4 fav; 2. Archines Casts 7-2: 3. Holy Sting 10-1. 6 ram. 2, 22. (N Henderson). Tota: 1240; E130, E130. DF: E340. C5F: 12871. 4.50: 1. THE PROMS (J Goldstein) 3-1 far; 2. Kinnshatila 5-1; 3. Ever Smille 8-1 12 ram. 1; sit-140. (N Twiston-Davises). Tota: 1390; E150, E220. E270. DF: 1230. CSF: 1795. Theast: £10406, Thic: 194660. Jacopot: £22953300 - part won. Pool of 184574 carried forward to Sandown today. Place 6: E5552 Place 5: £47;8.

● Jimmy McCarthy was yesterday banned for five days after easing down Torn Silk on the run-in of the novices' hurdle at Market Rasen and losing second place to Lorcan Wyer on Barnburgh Boy by a short bead.

INDEPE	ND)	ENT
RACING		
0891	261	+
LIVE COMMEN	TARIES	HESUITS
SANDOWN	971	981
CHERSTOM	972	982
AYR	973	983
WOLVERHAMPTON	974	984
0891 20	61 9	70
Company of the same of the sam	Lipe Street	用农民政制

HYPERION 1.15 Siberian Mystic 3.20 Petite Risk 3.50 Madison County 1.45 Sail By The Stars 2.15 Simons Castle (nb) 4.20 Fin Bec 2.45 Sparkling Cone GOING: Soft. Left-hand, undulating course with stiff fences. Bway, ADMISSION: Club £14; Taitersalls £10 (OAPs £5), CAR PARK; Free LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 44 winners from 36 numers (224%), P Hobba 22-86 (256%), N Twiston-Devies 21-115 (823%), P Nicholia 19-84 (226%). LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 32-19 (269%), C Liewellyn 18-97 (16.5%), R John son 12-59 (20.3%), W Marston 12-67 (17.9%). ● FAVOURITES: 159 wins in 389 races (40.9%). BIJNKERED FIRST TIME: (visored, 240).

Chepstow

Light blue, dark blue sash and cap

- 11 declared -

1.15 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS BBC1 C) £10,000 added 2m 4f 110yds £6,970

but two, one here over two males and the other a head defeat of the useful Red Blazer over this trip at Ayr. Not for one moment should the Ayr form be taken at face value – the runner-up insched larne and a 100-1 shot was only two lengths beach in third – but has Bangor run last Morch, when he split Daralichan and Morpheus in a tight finish with cut in the ground, was another good effort and he has the scope to dely top weight. Taking of scope, the late developer Men Antie has improved with every run and might have been chasing a fine-timer if a pin holding his stirrup leather health broken at Worcester in June. The form of his subsequent Lingfield win last month is working out and there is no denger of the conning too soon eller dotting up at Warwick last Seauralay, but he is baking on a decent sort in Zander. Even so, he couldn't be in better shape and should will go close again. Sheriam Mystic came from off the pace and finished strongly behind Mon Anne's stablemate Never in Debt and Mrs Em over a furlong less on much fissis ground at Taurdon last time. The winner looking about and wondering made it seem as if she firefred faster than she did and she will find this stirf course much more of a less of stamins on this ground against horses that will stay three miles. Quistaquery won at Towcester earlier in January. Shela a consistent mane who stays well and comes well into the neckning with her rider taking a handy 5to off. Alinel Soit II handles this ground well but should have his lambors exposed.

1.45 TOTE TEN TO FOLLOW HANDICAP CHASE BBCI (CLASS B) £15,000 added 3m 2f 110yds £9,968 BBCI 1 21-FFF BELIANT (AV) (C) (As Bille Band) P Nichols (1) 11 3

pink, black braces, helved steems, pink cap, black dismond
2 24-SP3 EXIDEPE (FR) (16) (D A Johnson) M Pipe 6 ft 4

soyal blace, emandel green steems, white cap, emandel green apols
3 U-3111 SAIL BY THE STARS (37) (T FF Nam) T Forster 9 (0 1)

dark green and crange (quarkneed), crange steems and cap
4 12-644 BIOT'S LADY (21) (D) (Ms. J Chern) Ms. J Pirran 9 (0 0

dark blue, red cap, green spots - 6 declared -Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: idict's Lady Set 11b, Brave Hightunder Set Sib, Killeshin Set 1b, BETTRIC: 11-8 Sell By The Stars, 100-30 Euclips, 9-2 Belmont King, 6-1 Idiots, Lady, 7-1 Brave Highlander, 25-1 Kileshin Hightender, 25-1 Killeshin 1997. Givertime 9 tij 1 L Harvey 11-4 (A Turnell) 7 rgn FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

SAIL BY THE STARS steps up in grade but it is her doing it at present as opposed to the supposed stars Eudipe and Belsnont King, Last month's seven-length defeat of General Purgo at Towosster was the third win on the trot for this tough mare. She relishes the ground, has improved as she has atopped up in distance and gets enough weight to continue her sequence. Eudipe's latest two runs have been a long way below last search's Royal & SunAllance second or his third behind Suny Bay in the Hennessy Gold Cup in November. Until he recaptures that sort of form – and his twice been tried in birdies this season – Eudipe is probably best watched. The 1997 Scottish National winse Eudipe the Cup in the Contract of the Contr persons that season — Europe as processory over waterion. The 1997 Scottesh National White here Belinnoth (Fing has yet to complete the course in three attempts this season. He hadn't been tool-perfect beforefoiling in Haydock's Greenalis National Trial a fortright ago though, life Europe, held go close on his best form and has at least won here. Idiotal audy was beaten eight and a half lengths mito fourth behind Ottowa at Uttorater last month only for the gap to widen when they mat again here. Selection: SAL BY THE STARS

SIR PETER O'SULLEVAN NOVICE HURDLE 2.15 SIR PETER O SULLEYAR NOT 2m 110yds (CLASS B) £20,000 added 5YO 2m 110yds BOLSHOI (POL) (K H Eng) M Maggardge 11 5 Scurran
gold, daw green aboves, gold cap, dark green ster
gold, daw green aboves, gold cap, dark green ster
31211 EFFECTUAL (7) (D) (B C Docs) Mas V Williams 11 5 Scurran
emantal green, black hoops, haked aboves, sweed green cap
(8275 MACHALINI (12) (bits Alexon Gambie) T George 11 5 Scurran
overge, black charrons, crarge aboves, black sames, black and coarge quariered cap
3-2021 SIMONS CASTLE (36) (D) (Mrs Barbons Macharth) R OSAiron 11 5 AP McCoy
yellow, royal blue from, royal blue shares, yellow amilies, quarkened cap
321 SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J Gifford 11 6 PHido
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J Gifford 11 6 PHido
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J Gifford 11 6 PHido
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J Gifford 11 6 PHIdo
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SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J GIFFORD 11 6 PHIDO
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F Elich) J GIFFORD 11 6 PHIDO
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (R F El yellow, black hoops, yellow sleeves, black seems

- 5 declared -BETTING: 7-4 Effectual, 2-1 Solomen, 9-4 Simons Cestle, 10-1 Machelial, 50-1 Bolshol 1997. What's The Vendot 5-11 5 C F Swan 13-8 fav (A P OBnov, 11) 9 nar

FORM GUIDE Venetia Williams is making hey with Effectual and the five-year-old is out again outduy Venetia Williams is making key with Effectual and the five-year-old is out again quickly after recording his fourth win in all to outrage at Domosater least Saturday. He won easily in the end and there's likely to be still more improvement to come, as there surely is from Sanons Castile and SOLOMAN. Iding in front cost Simons Castile the rese at Ascot January when Gattles pounced dose home end he then made the most of Bahamien Knight's slow jump at the test to hold on all out at Lingfleid, With Behamien Knight going no to finish second to Zarstakia at Newbury the form is decent and he is bound to go close. Soloman lacks the racing experience of the other two but has given a good account of himself in all times starts, firstly against Zarstakia at Ascot. Although besten further than Smons Castle west, it note. Wathba Castle some time to wear him down at Ascot next lime and he then won costly at Yowcester.

Minimum weight: 10st. True handloop weight: Clote of Magic 9st 10th. BETTING: 9-4 Petite Risk, 9-2 Linellight, 5-1 Another Hight, 11-2 Stema Creek, 6-1 Foreign Risk 7-1 Circle Of Magic, 12-1 Quilbellog 1997: Stu Gea 4 11 0 J A NaCCarthy 2-1 far (O Sherwood) 5 nm 3.50 PETER DOBSON ALLEN MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 3f 110yds 1 P-321 WELL TMED (44) 8hts G A Robertal R Rost 8 it 10 J Frost.
2 P-251 MADISON COUNTY (15) (D) (B K Replatif F Hobbs 8 it 7 R Farrant V 3 -R453 BOB DEVIANI (5) (D) (D K Replatif F Hobbs 8 it 7 R Farrant V 3 -R453 BOB DEVIANI (5) (D) (Timolity in Chick) T George 12 it 2 S Wyone 4 33235 ROBENS PRIDE (25) (Weeks, Staple, Littlejnins (C Authan 6 it 1 D Decombs 5 23334F JASON'S BOY (11) (D) (M E Jones) J M Backsy 8 it 4 R Johnston 8 4434-2 CHANGEL PASTIBLE (15) (D) (Ms Sandra Worthington) D Burchell 14 it 00 ... Guy Lowis (3) -6 duclared - 6 duclared - 7 duclared Resistant Resistant County, 190-30 Well Throad, 5-1 Japon's Boy, 11-2 Robin's Pride, 13-2 Bob Dewert, 8-1 Channel Presistan (Fig 16 it 4 P Carberry 6-1 (T Forster) 7 can 1997: Donium Colonges (FFI) 6 ff 4 P Carpery 6-1 (T Forster) 7 cm 4.20 COMMENTATOR'S MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m 4f 110yds 1 PSO ALL FOR THE CRACK (45) (Daw Doxol P Chemings 5 11 7.
2 435FF BANK AND BLIC (27) SO I Horistock) M Pitross 7 11 7.
3 PS BELLICKY COLIN (113) (C Reen) Mrs M Jones 7 11 7.
4 U. BUCKTAL (42) (336) (Smort Herset) N Gessibe 6 11 7.
5 SOP) CAPTAIN MORRIS (3) P Wegnersh P Wegners 6 11 7.
7 3000V COURTRY CONCORDE (742) (Bot Color) M J Wester 6 11 7.
8 25533 FIN BEC (Fig 82) (A A Kingl A P Jones 5 11 7.
9 40020 (DING PRODY (22) (Mrs 8 Abust) Mrs S Johnson 6 11 7.
10 35FUF SANOS PORTT (11) (Mrs C R Heyter) C Pophers 6 11 7.
11 35FUF SANOS PORTT (11) (Mrs C R Heyter) C Pophers 6 11 7.
12 400-PT WOU LODES (120) (Mr Ecistery) G Hers 8 17 7.
13 0 NOSEL LAD (15) (Innes Herheld Green (Fiss Paintings) M Pips 4 14 4 declared - 14 declared - 15 declared - 14 declared - 15 dec _S No BETTRICS, 5-2 Venetian Science, 7-2 King Peddy, 9-2 Nobel Lad, 5-1 Fin Bec, 8-1 Be Lincky Colin. 12-1 Bank Avenue, 25-1 others 1997: no corresponding race

Wolverhampton HYPERION 2.20 Naked Oat 2.50 Rockswain 3.25 Gralmano 3.55 Double Oscar 4.25 Refuse To Lose 5.00

GOING: Standard (Ali-weather track)
STALLS; tm 6f - outside; remainder - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 6f to tm 4f.
Fibreaand surface; left-hand course. Course is south-east of lown on B2028. Real station actions course ADMISSION: Outs £15; Tattersoile £5 (OAP members £24; Viewing Restaurant £2590 including entrance and re

Nikite's Star

● LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinsheed 64 winners from 623 run-● CADING TRANSERS: R Hollinsheed 64 winners from 623 nun-ners (103%), M Johnston 57-260 (219%), J Berry 45-308 (148%), P Hastern 40-212 (169%). ● LEADING JOCKEYS: J Wisner 59-279 (211%), S Sanders 44-349 (126%), G Carler 33-231 (143%), Dean McKepown 29-259 (112%). ● FAVOURITIES: 401 wins from 1236 races (22.4%). BLINKERED FIRST TIME: (visored, 3.30).

2.20 VICTORIA MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 1m 100yds

46 HILLS GAMBLE (10) P Bergn 89 12 ___ 9 665-52 LOBUCHE (14) R Harmon 3 6 8 Reduce 3 10 53-33 MAC'S BACK (USA) (14) Mrs L Subbs 3 6 8 K Fellon 8 V 666-52 LOBUCHE (14) R Hannon 3 8 8.

00: MANDHAR (173) G Lewis 388 Paul Eddery G 14-3: NAICEO CAT (85) E Strait 7388 JS Astock 1 64: JARRAYAN (200) S C Williams 383 G Carter 12 -13 declared -— 19 Juniority — BETTING; 9-6 Desert Mirage, 4-1 Hahrd Cet, 6-1 Dentardia, 7-1 Hac's Back, 8-1 Jurrayan, 9-1 Handhar, 10-1 Lobacha, 14-1 Dencing Grey, 25-1 others 2.50 NORTHERN TERRITORY SELLING STAKES (CLASS F) \$2,000 3YO 6f _C Lowber (3) ?

_Deen McKeawn 6 Y

hania, 20-1 Protocol, 33-1 Silect Valley 3.55 J. S. WRIGHT HANDICAP (CLASS C) 28,000 added 5t Onto: STATE OF CAUTION (SS) (C) I) Show 5 10 0 ... I Feming 12 V 00536- CREEN GFT (128)(CD) N Librarden 7 9 12 ... I Weever 13 B 00000- SOLD EFFORT (117) (C) K Currengleon-Brown 69 10 ... A Clear's R

4.25 ED WEETMAN LINCOLN TRIAL C4 added 1m 100yds

C200-1 WEEDWAYSWEEL (part of Cartifornical SS2 ___ A MicCoulty (\$1,7 etc.) white seem, made seemen, white emotings, and 8 white seigned capation of the URSA MAJOR (14,8) of Color 4.9 2 ______ Middle seigned capation of the URSA MAJOR (14,8) of Color 4.9 2 ______ Middle seigned capation of the URSA MAJOR (14,8) of Alley 4.9 0 ______ OS Seementy (3) 6.9 V. Burkey 4.9 0 ______ OS Seementy (3) 6.9 V. white, assented green appealable and store on storence yellow rap 640-4 HEMER GOLF GLORY (14) (D) T.J Naughton 480........... D Hulland 5 to the control of the 12 34-11 FAYIK (48) (CO) A Newcombe 48 12

crange, black riphy element, balled shares UNSC WALTZER (15) (CD) D Nichells 68 ft ____F Norton 3 royal olice, yellow cross balls, red cap, yellow spots, — 13 declared
— 13 declared
— 15 declared
— 15 declared
— 15 declared
— 16 declared
— 17 declared 16 declared
— 18 declared 18 declared
— 18 declared 18 declared
— 18 declared 18 declared
— 18 decla

Guil Shaadi has been raised tith for his five-length beating of Yarob over a sightly longer journey 10 days ago, and Refuse 10 Lose is up the same amount for his complated win at Lingfield, where he readily came clear of Plan For Profit and beat him seven lengths. There's no reason why tray shouldn't go well again, along with Feylik, an improved handcapper earlier this year and who has been given a short break since he completed his hat-inch here in January. One that might just spring a surprise at a decent price is HEVER GOLF GLOFIX His win in the Sweetish 2000gns at Stockhom hast, June is difficult to weigh up, but beforehand held finished that in a Listed race at Chardilly and had good residen form here. In his first nos this year, Hever Golf Gory was beaten by time recent winners when fourth to Stearwoller Startly at Lingfield and Darryll Holland replaces the inexpensenced apprentice that node him that tay, Last year, Weetman's Weigh benefited from the move up to seven furlongs, but hels so at home over that trip and there must be a sight doubt as to whether hell be as effective over this setended mile. The consisted win from Trojan Hero startings him as good as ever, though, and Advian McCarthy's 5th silowance will help offset the subsequent 6th rise. Rambo Waltzer is only 2th higher than he was when he won the corresponding handicap a year ago, while Cracy Chief is from that year that won lest years. The trip looks on the short side for While Piellers, and it might struct. trip looks on the short side for White Plains, and it might straich dust Lout, while Threadneedle's two wins for Lord Huntingdon were in relatively weak claiming races. Selection: HEVER GOLF GLORY

FORM GUIDE Gulf Sheadil has been relead 12th for his five-length beating of Yero

5.00 TASMANIA HANDICAP (CLASS D) 55,000 added 1m 6f 166yds 1 22631 JAMAICAN FLIGHT (17) (C) Mrs S Lamyman 5 10 Q C Tengue (3) 1
2446 CHANDA TIMOR (21) (CD) Rico S William 69 85 Williams (5) 2
2446 CHANDA TIMOR (21) (CD) Mes S William 69 85 Williams (5) 0
2444 MINTAS STAR (6) (C) D Muray Start (5) 2
2444 MINTAS STAR (6) (C) D Muray Start (5) 2
2454 MINTAS STAR (6) (C) D Muray Start (5) 2
2452 SUGA HAWK (5) (C) (BF) E Alsim 6 8 9 JF Egan 6
25-20 DENNITY (22) S Woods 4 6 7 N Day 4
4422 SOTATION (22) D Chapman 4 6 0 L Chamback 7

- 9 deciend -BETTING: 11-4 Juneicen Flight, 3-1 Nosfari, 5-1 Notation, 6-1 Nickets Star 7-1 Bullets Boy, 8-1 Soga Hawk, 10-1 Petoskin, 20-1 others

حكدًا من الاعل

Express to fly in for Ramsdens

THE REVIEW from Shake- champion trainer is 5-1 to send before next week's Cheltenham

The eight-year-old hummed round the gallops near Robin Stratford, though the trainer was not tempted to immediately elevate his chestmut to take on the titans in the Queen Moth-Chase in which he will be just about favourite. "He can only please God, he will be in next year's Champion," Dickin said yesterday.

bullish, and Cheltenham is Cheltenham, but on the bare form of what they've all shown up to now Kadastrof will win the Arkle. There are a lot of unknowns. Edelweis Du Moulin hasn't beaten anything yet and who knows how good he could be? And I would be terrified of Champleve too.

"He [Kadastrof] worked fabulously this morning. He was as free as a bird and he looks a mil-

lion dollars." more unusual players at this year's Festival. He is a horse qualities to good effect across Mracing's divisions, having won on the Flat, over hurdles and over made a cock-up. fences. He likes to keep busy and has won six times this sea-

TAX (**: 20 35

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rot.

Perhaps Kadastrof's best offering this season came in defeat though when he finished a reached 7-1. close second to Ask Tom in the Game Spirit Chase at Newbury on St Valentine's Day. That winner now heads the market for the Champion Chase and will not at least be crowded out in the two-mile championship following yesterday's decleration their last meal had been a cur-

There will be a maximum of an hour before the face. 11 runners in next Wednesday's centrepiece, including past winners of the race in Klairon Davis and Viking Flagship. The contest is greatly flavoured by the inclusion of One Man, who has died a horrible death at each of the last two Festivals.

There will be a relatively small field too for the same day's Royal & SunAlliance Chase. The presence of Ireland's latest wonderhorse, Florida Pearl, has scared off many opponents and the big horse will now have a maximum of I1 rivals, ensur-

Martin Pipe, who has provided the winner of the race in Rolling Ball and Minnehoma, supplies a third of the cutry. In a book with Ladbrokes the

since eight lined up in 1993.

speare country was most upbeat out four winners at the meeting. yesterday as Kadastrof gave his as he did 12 months ago. He is last serious home performance 3-1 to saddle two or three winners and 6-1 to draw a blank.

Pipe may warm up for Prestbury Park by saddling the winner of today's big race, Sandown's Dickin's Alscot Park yard at Sonderlands Imperial Cup, in which he is represented by the favourite, Blowing Wind.

The bookmaking sponsors offer a £50,000 bonus for any er Champion Chase. Kadastrof horse that goes on to collect a will instead remain in novice race at the Festival after sucess company for an Arkie Trophy at Esher. Sunderlands offset their liability by offering delibcrately short odds at Chelrun in the Arkle once and, tenham on their Sandown winner, which they then back with rival firms. They had to cough up five years ago when "I don't want to sound too Pipe himself achieved the double with Olympian.

> RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Idiot's Lady (Chepstow 1.45) NB: Hoh Express (Sandown 4.05)

The Imperial Cup has been made notable this week by the tumbling price of two horses. Blowing Wind himself was cut drastically by Coral, William Hill and Victor Chandler despite Kadastrof will be one of the those firms not taking a penny piece from the general public. The bookmakers' argument was who has shown his battling that they had not initially assessed the race correctly, which, in pub parlance, means they

> The other great movement NO JOCKEY at the Chelcame when Rubhahunish, who was the 66-1 rank outsider early in the week; suddenly dropped like a stone until he

The gambled on horses are united by the fact that their rocent form is ostensibly deplorable. Blowing Wind did manage to split Collier Bay and Reikeel at Haydock last time, but those horses ran as if ry - and they d shared it about

It is possible that the gambling smokescreens will mean good value about a horse from a notoriously serious punting yard. While another fancied horse in Nordance Prince is unlikely to appreciate the going, the surface looks perfect for Lvnda Ramsden's Hoh Express

(next best 4.05). There is solitary action today too from Wolverhampton and three contests on the BBC from Chepstow. The Welsh races muster just a pathetic 16 runners between them, but there appears to be two standout value bets. Mon Amie (1.15) is improving quicker than the handicapper thinks, while IDIOT'S LADY (nap 1.45) faces opponents who are mostly either out of form or

out of the handicap.

ers' hearts with a kind appreciation of a horse's performance. This may be a skill passed great-great grandfather. Sur- ented.

pion jockey from over the wa-

here so I've always felt Irish,"

that his ancestors have not

played a part in moulding him.

When it comes to post-match

chit-chat in the unsaddling en-

closure there are few who can

match Charlie's expertise. He

can soothe the saddest of own-

place of Cloughjordan.

Charlie's physician when the tenham Festival next week will be carried out on to the race-Prince's army was scattered by Butcher Cumberland at Cullocourse by a greater wave of pubden Moor. As the surgeon was lic support than Charlie Swan. on the point of execution, he Yet an odd fact is that while his most potent weighing-room rivals in Richard Dimwoody, suggested the cold steel would be better employed repairing Tony McCoy and Adrian English generals injured in the conflict. He volunteered and Maguire are Irishmen based in England, the eight-times cham-His descendant has survived

geon Swan was Bonnie Prince

ter has nothing but British long enough on another field of blood swirling through his veins. strife to become the most suc-Charlie Swan's father is cessful jumps jockey Ireland has Scottish and his mother English, but any notion that the jockey is anything but a son of the winners in his homeland than sharmock himself is met with great bafflement. "I was born record for both most winners in a season and the most in a calhe says. Indeed, Swan has nevendar year. He has twice been er felt it necessary to move more leading jockey at the Chelthan a few hundred metres tenham Festival, where he has from his Co Tipperary birthpartnered 11 winners. Aidan-O'Brien, his main employer, calls him "the best jumps jock-That is not to say, however,

Yet Swan himself is most unenthusiastic about his own skills. "If anything at all stands out in my riding it's the ability to judge pace," he says. "I suppose you have to have a small bit of talent to do what I've done, but it's more important to be in the right place at the right time. It's down by his great-great-great- better to be born lucky than tal-

ey in the world".

Cheltenham glory beckons for Ireland's top rider. Richard Edmondson reports

Swan reserved for a Champion role

"There are several other jockeys who are just as good as his first Cheltenham win with room. If circumstances had would have ridden into the record books in my place."

Savouring the moment: Despite his great successes at Cheltenham and beyond, Charlie Swan has not become spoilt by his good fortune

It may have been hard, however known. Charles Francis on the yellow brick road during Thomas Swan has ridden more his early days as an apprentice, when he used to lift muck sacks loaded on to his shoulders by someone else. When he arrived at Kevin Prendergast's vard, there was one particular fellow apprentice who did not exactly afford him a pot of tea and scones welcoming party. Swan and Kieren Fallon have, though, left their juvenile hostility a long way behind.

Charlie too soon made distant history of those chimneysweep days and by 1987 he had his first ride at the Festival on Irish Dream, trained by his father, Donald. The tyro broke his left arm in that venture, and the long surgical scars on his arms reveal how vulnerable those limbs have been ever since.

Three years later, Swan had

I am, but they haven't had the Trapper John in the Stavers' breaks that I have. I look at Hurdle and another three years some of them in the jockeys' after that he won the Ritz Club Trophy as the meeting's leading been different, one of them rider. A second Ritz in 1994 included the celebrated Coral Cup victory of Time For A Run, whose trainer, Edward ever, to convince Swan he was O'Grady, told Swan to go out Greenalls Gold Cup and a niques have managed to mainand ride with balls of steel. By that our jockey understood he was not to take out some ball anyone else, and also holds the so heavy he had to have them bearings in a pocket. O'Grady's there are signs that he no longer memento of a board covered in

> two steel balls is among the trophies in Swan's lounge. By that time, CF Swan had become the Blondin of the turf and was balancing his commitments so delicately that he rode just about every decent horse in Ireland. In a perverse way this helped the careers of young men like McCoy and Paul Carberry, who were forced to desert Ireland in search of more boun-

green baize and embedded with

tiful opportunities elsewhere. Yet throughout his persistent hegemony there has always been the grandstand gossip that Chartie Swan was nowhere near as effective over fences as be

was over hurdles. Charlie, as you might imagine, disputes this. "I used to do a lot of showjumping and cross-country before I was on the Flat and maybe I forgot that and it took me a while your call though with a fresh sigto get back into the swing of things over jumps," he says, "but that was a long time ago.

"People can say what they like, and even though I've only in England, they have been two Whitbread Gold Cups, a Even modern dentistry tech-Champion Chase."

This will be the first Festival

of Swan's third decade and has the appetite to chase down every single ride, even at the greatest meeting of them all. He most wants to win the big races, especially Istabraq's Champion Hurdle on Tuesday. "I've got some nice rides but I don't have the ammunition this year that I've had in the past," he says. "I used to ride in nearly every race good enough," he says. over there but this year I don't have as many rides.

"I didn't particularly want to that's the race before Istabraq and you don't often get the chance to ride a favourite in the Champion Hurdle, so you like lead-up as possible."

When you telephone Charlie Swan, especially around Festival time, you get used to the engaged signal. When connection is made, however, he treats nificance that suggests it's Alexander Graham Bell on the other end. Despite the sort of success which has stained others, little has changed about ridd 1 four winners over fences Charlie, the quiet little boy who used to have a stammer. tain a set of choppers that were designed with apple-bobbing more in mind than National

> Hunt racine. Charlie will be a reassuring figure at Prestbury Park this week, a man who appreciates what the fates have given him and continues to do so. "There's that bit more pressure beforehand at this meeting but once you're out there on the horse it's just down to whether you're

"It's a nice rivalry at the Festival on the track and in the stands. When you look at all the take a ride in the Arkle because trouble north of the border, it's good to see everyone so relaxed at Cheltenham, where the Irish and English thing is so good-natured. Cheitenham will always to take as much risk out of the be the meeting for me. I just



GREG WOOD THE A-Z OF BETTING

Z is for \dots

Zero: The amount, more or less, which off-course bookmakers contribute to racing via the Levy. This is hardly news, since perceptive punters have been pointing out for years that there is a significant difference between the level of off-course betting duty demanded by the Chancellor (currently 6.75 per cent) and the amount that the bookies charge on your bets (nine per cent, charged on either your stake before the race or your returns - if your horse wins - afterwards). It is true that an accounting anomaly forces them to pay tax on tax when punters pay up beforehand, but then, they also charge nine per cent on everything, even though it is only bets on British horse racing

Levy Board, which is then passed back to the sport via prize-money, interest-free loans for racecourse development and so on. The basic truth is that punters, not bookies, pay the Levy, and this would not be quite so irritating - any busicustomers to pay its overheads - were it not for the fact that even now there are still some stubborn bookmakers' repre-£50m or so the Board receives each year comes out of their Royston Ffrench, his jockey, pockets. Add to this the fact that the bookies are reprehave a say in how the money on a possibly grateful horse

which require a payment to the and it is a wonder that the lumpen proletariat that is the British punting class has not long since risen up to secure some basic human rights. Perhaps they are still trying to decide who should be first against

ness, after all, will require its Zaralaska: One of the more of the non-trying rules innotorious horses to be given a enough, when he finished fifth in a handicap at York's Dante sentatives who insist that the meeting last year. Luca Cumani, his trainer, was fined, and banned after that run, but as it turned out, the 30-day ban sented on the Board and thus from the racecourse imposed is spent - a classic case of tax- was not exactly a punishment

days later, Zaralaska bolted up in the Bessborough Stakes at Royal Ascot, which rather forced the Jockey Club to look again at its well-intentioned attempt to punish horses which do not give their all.

As a result, the latest version cludes a cunning little clause "holiday" for not trying hard which forbids a horse banned for not trying (the penalty, incidentally, is now 40 days) from running in a major race until it has taken in a lesser event to allow the handicapper (not to mention punters) to have a close look at it.

Zigzag: The sort of path that thousands of punters will be ation without representation - from the Judge Jeffreys school taking out of Cheltenham race-

of jurisprudence. Precisely 32 course on Thursday evening. And why? Because a few thousand years ago, mankind discovered zymolysis, otherwise known as the process of fermentation. Look it up if you don't believe me.

> Zoophobia: An irrational dread of animals, which as it happens is another likely trait among the crowds leaving the home of jump racing next week. Stephen Little, the highrolling rails bookie, is fond of remarking that he never lays a bet on "anything that talks". The nation's punters are about to embark on a wild ride through three days at the Festival which will probably remind them yet again that Stephen is a very smart man.

BETTING: 5-4 Monica's Choice, 7-2 Capitaz, 9-2 Fee Terriez, 6-1 Common Sound, 12-1 Now Young Man, 14-1 Parish

- 5 declared --BETTRIC: 6-4 Montrare, 5-2 Sloging Sand, 5-1 Crosebot, Beld Boss, 8-1

4.15 HUGH BANGLAY FAMALE 2m

The answer is just **Blowing Wind**

The former National Hunt jockey Steve Smith Eccles (right) gives a runner-by runner analysis of today's Imperial Cup at Sandown



Blowing Wind: Ex-French horse who has been backed in to favouritism. A good third to Dato Star at Haydock and although that race is hard to assess, money talks it takes to win a race like this. Nahrawali: A good fourth in the Tote Gold Trophy and should run another big race. Alabang: A decent second in the Lanzarote Hurdle, this consistent type has sound each-way claims. Graham Bradley rates his chance. Serenus: Won his first two races this season but has

disgraced when fourth to Shahrur at Kempton. Debutante Days: A useful mare on her day, she has been

been up against it since. Not

hinting at a return to form. Kingsfold Pet: Won on heavy ground last time and would need it soft to play a part. Nordance Prince: Only a novice but in great form with caster. Sure to run well with

Danegold: Acts on good to firm and it may be too soft. House Of Dreams: Consistent but outclassed, even with and Martin Pipe knows what Adrian Maguire's assistance. Regency Rake: Arthur Moore has plundered some big British prizes but this one is not likely to add to the tally. Rubhahunish: Simply not good enough. Silent Cracker: Pulled up last time and would be bet-

Star Selection: In form but

looks out of his depth.

ter suited by a longer trip. Hoh Express: Useful ex-Flat racer who won a novice at Musselburgh but steps up in class. One to keep an eye on. Sadier's Realm: In excellent form, having won four of his last five outings.

Conclusion: The support for BLOWING WIND suggests he will take all the beating, but his form is difficult to assess. He should see off the wins at Sandown and Don- challenge of Nordance Prince and Alabang, who looks the his yard in cracking form. each-way bet of the race.

Ayr

HYPERION 1.30 Warrlin 2.00 Radical Choice 2.35 Aren't We Lucky 3.05 Feels Like Gold 3.40 Monica's Choice 4.15 Singing Sand 4.50 A Piece Of Cake

GOING: Soft (Heavy patches).

List-hand gaboping course.

List-hand gaboping course.

Course is E of lown on A758. Apr station 1th. ADMISSION: Club
Course is E of lown on A758. Apr station 1th. ADMISSION: Club
Civi. Grandstand 27 (CAP4 Inst-price). CAR PARIC: Pres.
Civi. Grandstand 27 (CAP4 Inst-price). CAR PARIC: Pres.
Civi. List Course in Cou P Montellin 19-137 (19.9%).

① LEADING JOCKETYS: A Dobbin 37 wins from 176 rides (21%), B . Stony 27-739 (23%). T Read 14-126 (10%), R Stoppie 10-45 (22.2%). P 30 FAVOURTIES: 178 wins from 400 races (43.5%). SLINGUINED FIRST TIME: None.

1.30 CHEF PING BATCHELOR'S NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 4YO 2m

PROPERTY (ALL POST OF CONTROL OF

2.00 JOHN BROWN MEMORIAL NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m-1f 04-040 PERLOE BANKETER (SE) R Johnson 7 II 3. K Johnson LEP-44 LAKELAND EDITION (17) Mrs A Neughton 7 To 12. Supple

- 8 decimal - BETTENC: 10-11 Paperhing, 5-2 Redical Choice, 13-2 Cottatown Boy, 8-1 Copperheast, 25-1 Fusion Remitter, Laboland Edition. 2.35 EAGLE TAVERNS NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) 25,000 3m 110yds

1 40-22 MERY MASOLEPADE 239 (C) this M Routiny 7 11 to J. Nilson.
2 0542 ARRENT ME LUCKY (23) J J O'Neil 6 10 11 _____ P Carbarry
3 0505F RUSSIAN ARRECT (24) 14 W Ensimby 4 10.4 ___ P Morte (5)
4 42225 J,0WOODY (26) Ms D Thomson 5 10.3 _____ G Les
5 PD-003 CHEF CHRYPE (108) W Long 5 10.0 _____ B Nanday
6 PD003 MEDDLE BAY (26) D Moffait 7 10.0 _____ B Moderath (3)
7 0-PPO ALLPORUS (21) Ms D Thomson 8 10.0 _____ R Moderath (3)
Minimum weights: 10st. True innotices weights: Chief Chippin Oct 12th, Michael Say 941 724, Allforus 8xt 10th.

BETTING: 5-4 Manny Managemente, 5-2 Aren't We Lucky, 11-2 Journaly, 8-1 Russian Aspect, 12-1 Chief Chippie, 14-1 Middle Bay, 66-1 Afforms. 3.05 HAMILTON CAMPBELL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) 25,000 added 3m 1f

655068 PROFLIGHT (USA) (12) M Hammond 7 to 0 _____ R Gentley 1/P2P- STONEY BURKE (266) (2) Mass L Rescal 8 to 13 ______ Mr M Bradburne (1) STREET FEELS LIKE GOLD (15) (CD) G Ficheros 10 10 S A Dol

Minister weight: 10st. True-hirardisap weights: Marchwood 9st 76. BETTNS: 9-4 Celtic Gjent, 5-2 Profitaest, 7-2 Naughly Fatura, 4-1 Feels Lika Gold, 16-1 Standy Burka, 20-1 Marchwood, 33-1 Eester Cels.

3.40 AYRSHIRE YEOMANRY CUP HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) 54,000 2m 4f 2010 CALLICER (18) (C) M Barnes 5 2 0 S Taylor (S)
Altrop FEN TERRER (42) (C) F Murtagh 8 11 5 A Dobbin
S8-PS MONICA'S CHOICE (21) (BF) Mm M Pavaley 7 11 2. P Mora
25-82P PARSAH (42) (O) M Tochurar 9 10 0 P Corbery.

**MONITORING MAIN (15) L Lungo 8 12 0 R Sopple
182342 COMMON SOUND (8) J Berder 7 10 0 N Horrocks (8)
182342 COMMON SOUND (8) J Berder 7 10 0 N Horrocks (9)
- 6 declared Ministry weight: 10st. The handlet Set 90., Common Sound Bat 55.

4.50 FLAT RACE (CLASS H) \$1,500 added 2m THE BURGLE (CLASS II) 2 1, 11 1, 12 - 2 decisred -BETTING: events Sillyunges, 52 Rochebbyrg, 4-1 A Place of Calce, 12-1 Table After Thyree, 16-1 Freelandes, 33-1 Others

How the start of the game turns perfection into poverty



ROWBOTTOM

ON THE GULF BETWEEN TRAINING AND COMPETITION

YOU notice it most obviously tion, they are doing much the nomenal Ukrainian pole area beside the stage at the casions when parents and inthey are on the pitch, still wearing their tracksuits, bursting into impressive, zig-zagging sprints and flicking the ball about with a disdain reminiscent of Alfredo di Stefano.

The goalkeeper is a marvel of competence as he deals dismissively with every practice shot, clutching this effort, watching with a hint of scorn as another passes inches wide of his post.

The lumbering central defender picks a ball up on his foot as if it is attached to his boot, lifts it into the air and playfully allows it to settle on his bear-like shoulders.

What a team. Pity the opponents. Although, on inspec-

with footballers, I think. There same thing. What a match in prospect, then...

Ten minutes later, the jugglers have turned to oafs and the pitch is given over to dull industry. The referee blew his whistle. And something hap-

tales told of phenomenal sporting performances produced outside competition. Athletics. with its literal measures of achievement, produces large

Before Roger Bannister became the first man to break four minutes for the mile, there were stories that his great Australian rival, John Landy, had already done so in training.

We spoke in the warm-up Sergei Bubka, the phe-

vaulter, has long been rumoured to have achieved heights well above his official world records while practising.

High jumpers report prodigious clearances in training; javelin throwers reflect upon monster throws, throws which weren't measured but which must have been, oh, well over 90 metres. Easily.

Relaxation, a crucial part of athletic endeavour, comes easily when it doesn't matter. But the same is true in the realm of the unathletic competitor. I once interviewed Eric

Bristow about the affliction which had undermined his position as the world's leading dart thrower - dartitis.

world championships in Frim- terested parties were invited, ley Green. I had just watched Bristow tip handful after dainty handful of darts into the tre- in what must surely have been ble 20 on the board behind his table. The Crafty Cockney appeared to be at his peak.

But he knew otherwise. And, when he got out on to the board, he faltered. Anybody who has ever competed at anything could sympathise.

At such times, I often think with a rush of shame of my own lamentable failings in competitive conditions. One excruciating example comes to mind more often than others - the final of a table tennis competition which I reached while on holiday as a young teenager.

It was one of those grim oc-

and my own family dutifully turned up to watch me partake one of the most dismal sport-

I knew - from informal practice - I had the measure of my smaller, younger opponent. But as the match progressed, I became assailed with a kind of palsy. When, to everyone's relief, the match ended, I had won. But in truth, my opponent had simply lost even more dis-

ing spectacles ever witnessed.

Responding positively to the those two little words game on - is the key to any sporting achievement. It is not surprising that sports psychology is a huge growth area.

astronsly than I had.

Increasingly, the world's sporting arenas are filling with jargon as competitors strive to win the battle of the mind.

According to this new orthodoxy, you must strive every day for focus; you must cast all negativity from your soul; and which shall hereonin be known as "The Zone".

At last month's winter Olympics, I asked a member of the Canadian women's ice hockey team how she and her colleagues were reacting to the fact that they had come into the competition as favourites.

Her previously open face clouded over as she executed Mental Gameplan One. "Pressure doesn't exist in our vocabulary," she said.

A startling tactic. Deny the existence of a thing, and it disappears. Excellent. But why stop there? Why not deny the existence of defeat?

As things turned out, the Canadians lost the final to their keenest rivals, the Unityou must seek a state of grace ed States. They may have managed to keep pressure out of their vocabulary, but they couldn't exclude it from their minds.

Three cheers for that. Because watching competitors cope with the anxiety, doubt and the cold fear which pressure trails in its wake is one of the most compelling elements of any sporting spectacle. Those pre-match jugglers need to turn into oafs for the real jugglers' worth to become apparent.

Betts puts his shoulder to the wheel for Wigan

himself talking about shouldering new responsibilities at Wigan, he winces at the recent memory of what his shoulder has put him through.

No doubt it will all seem worthwhile at his second coming for Wigan in the Challenge Cup tie against St Helens tomorrow, but he has suffered to make it possible.

It all started last October in Brisbane when Betts, playing for the Auckland Warriors but altackle on Broncos' Peter Ryan.

at me and then went away. I was reaching for him and his knee and real, tear-jerking pain. caught me right in the shoulder," Betts says. "It came out of the socket and went straight back in and knowing it would just be The bad part was that the muscles around it were gone.

"I tried to get off the field, but they didn't seem to want to only signed an over-priced play-I was, I went back into the deman down with one arm."

tape of that moment and hear- took over at Central Park they the ball more up the middle.

By Dave Hadfield

WHEN Denis Betts catches Dave Hadfield on the second coming of rugby league's renowned second row

> ing about typical English commitment. tackling. It was destined to hurt

a lot more. Major surgery involved stitching chest muscles back together and tightening the ligaments and tendons to hold everything in place.

"What I've had to do since ready scheduled for a return to then is stretch everything England this season, lined up a again," Betts says. "It doesn't want to stretch, so it's not a nice He got it wrong. "He came in thing to have to do. It's been two sessions a day with the physic

again, which was the good part. pain and more pain - and that there were months to go." On top of that, there were the whispers that Wigan had not short of justifying his status as

"I got really, really depressed

take me off and, being the prat er, but a crippled one as well. fensive line and found myself back home is the stuff of rugby trying to stop a try by pulling the league legend. Accurate fig. "I was having to play a differ-

Crowther ready for clash of cousins

right over the top of him," says their reputation is as a tena-

the Eagles' coach, John Kear. cious, workmanlike side, the ad-

"Matt has the ability to become dition of Dave Watson at

ing commentators who were unaware of what he had done talk- start looking for ways out of the

The arrival of Dave Whelan and his unfathomably deep pockets has averted that crisis, but Betts says that he never felt under any added pressure because of the price on his head. I get paid what people will pay

me," he says. "I'm getting what the market said I was worth." But what are Wigan getting? "I'm a better player now than when I left Wigan," the 28-year-

old Betts says. "I'm more mature,

I've experienced the biggest competition in the game and I'm with getting up every morning a little bit more worldly wise." Betts' globetrotting has not brought him undiluted approval. There were those in Auckland who believed he fell

the Warriors' biggest signing. "The people who count The cost of bringing Betts knew the effort I was putting into a struggling side," he says. ures are clusive, but suffice it to ent type of game. We had two

The London Broncos got the

Rovers, but they will be hoping

for more cohesion in their play

and better support at The Stoop

than they got against Halifax in

the last round. That was an un-

convincing victory, showing that

"I've brought back three TVs, a couple of videos and a cupboard full of other man of the match awards, so I must

have had some big games." All the same, it was when Betts reverted to a wider-ranging role, for Great Britain in the Test series in New Zealand in 1996 and for the Warriors in the World Club Championship, that Kiwi audiences saw what they had been expecting.

Expectations are also high at Wigan and Betts is aware of the old adage that you should never try to recreate old glories. After all, the main reason he left Wigan was that he had become bored with the predictability with which they beat inferior opposition week after week.

"I'm coming back to a very different club from the one I left. I can't see a situation where we'll dominate the way we did. There should be five or six clubs in the running for honours and that's what will lift standards here."

Starting tomorrow, Betts will re-forge his alliance with Andy Farrell, who virtually carried the side through last season. "He's had to do a lot," Betts says, "but It hurt enough watching the say that when the new regime young props and I was taking now I'll be able to shoulder ouch! - some of the burden."

London have still to gel on the

With that - and the threat of

Rovers' explosive Stanley Gene

- in mind the Broncos will play

Peter Gill at stand-off, with

Terry Matterson at loose for-

ward and Robbie Beazley re-

and a poster campaign should

bring in a better crowd than the

disappointing 3,000 who

watched the Halifax game - but

need to be wary of the goal-

kicking of Mike Fletcher.

They should be good enough

turning at hooker.



Denis Betts: Fit again after enduring 'pain and more pain'

Photograph: Allsport

Sheffield and Castleford will be a top-class winger this season.* stand-off and the presence of Flowers, the scorer of his Crowther on one wing and side's winning try against Brad-Nick Pinkney on the other hint

underlined today when cousins Matt Crowther and Jason Flowers hurtle into each other.

left wing. If he gets around the outside of the Cas defence, it will be their full-back Flowers who will have the responsibility for stopping him.

THE close links between

"If he gets through, he'll go

ford in the last round, will have at a more expansive approach. Crowther, one of Sheffield's other ideas about that, but Cas contingent of Castleford-born are treating the unfashionable draw they wanted, in the shape

players, is a recent convert to the Eagles as potentially more dan- of First Division Hull Kingston gerous opponents than the vanquished Leeds and Bradford and full of purpose and opti-

Weekend fixture guide

mism, Sheffield do indeed represent a tricky hurdle. Although

Football 3 0 unless stated

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

FA UMBRO TROPHY FOURTH ROUND Chetenham v Hayes Taunton v Tow Liev..... Tiverton v Kidagrove ..

Judiciously strengthened

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Besingstoke; Carshelton v Histohi; Dulwich v Yeading; Herrow Borough v Bishoph v Yeading; Herrow Sorough v Bishoph Stortford; Hendon v Sutton Und; Kingstonian v Walton & Hersham; Purfiest v St Albana. First Divisions: Barton Rovers v Blientosy; Cherssey v Bognor Regis; Croydon v Adesshot; Grays v Worthing; Hampton v Abingdon Rown; Lestherhead v Leyton Pennant; Malderhead Uld v Stainer; Molesey v Wickingham; Romford v Berichamsted; Thame v Wembley; Uddridge v Whysleeta, Sacond Division: Bartong v Windsor & Bon; Bradenel v Bernstadt; Braintre v Edgrette, Carwey Island v Bertingt v Windsor & Elon; Bradenel v Bernstadt; Braintre v Edgrette, Carwey Island v Bestiont; Cratifont & Peers v Northwood; Horsham v Edgrett, Hungerford v Wittern; Leighton v Marlow; Tooting & Mitcham v Tibury, Weeldstone v Martonelian Polics; Wiwenhoe v Cheshunt, Thride Division; Aveley v Dording; Cemberley v Registered Health; Carthier Casula v East Thurodic, Groydon Ath v Hertford; Egorm & Ewell v Kingston; Heriow v Southalt; Homchurch v Ford; Lawes v Were; Titrg v Herrel Herropstead; Wingste & Finchley v Clapton.

ley © Capton.
UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Acongipor Stanley v Leigh Padi: Bernber Bridge v Runcorn; Chorley v Findiey, Geisebotuph v Colwyn Bay, Guiseley v Hydic, Marina v Ernley; Spernymoor v Alfreton; Winsford Bryth Finat Division: Congleton v Eastwood Town; Droyleden v Great Herwood; Finsley v Worlengton; Findion v Badong Pk; Gratina v Mastock; Hamogate Town v Belper; Netherfield v Lincoln Unit; Stociabridge Pk v Ashion; Whitly v Trafford; White Bey v Worlenge.

ley Bey v Workson.

OR MARTIENS LEAGUE Pressier Division:
Beth v Forest Green; Bromagnove v King's
Lynn; Cerntriche City v Aeridard, Dorchester
v Atherstone; Gousessier v Naneaton; Hestings v Burton Abbon; Merthyr v St Leonards
Stamundt; Strängbourne v Morcester; Temworth v Satisbury; Miditand Division: Bedworth v Satisbury; Miditand Division: Bedworth v Satisbury; Miditand Division: Bedworth v Basisbury; Miditand Division: Bedworth v Brackey; Biston v Pleunds; Hradley
v Shepahed Dysamo; Recing Cub Warwick
v Nison Green; VS Rugby v Evershum; Wisbert v Bisistrail. Southern Division: Beldock v Fleet; Chelreford; V Colcanford;
Chencester v Basisley; Dartland v Waterlooville; Fisher v Trowbridge; Newport
& Belvedow.

But sonort internet Coll Witters LEAGUE.

6 Behndoff.
URLISPORT UNITED COUNTES LEAGUE.
Presider Division: Boston Bown v Kampston;
Ford Sports v Mirrices Blackstone; Long
Bucktyv Eymestury; Northampton Spercer
v Poton; St Nects v Boston; Startford v Desborough; StL. Corby v Wootton; Startford v Desborough; StL. Corby v Wootton; Startford v
Spating; Wellingborough v Hobeach; Yavlay v Buckingham Town.

winstondead Kent League First Di-visions Beckenhen v Revention: Cray v Chattern: Chadenhill v Constitute: Deal v Shappey, Enth v Lardswood; Hythe v VCo Athetic Paragues v Herne Bay; Sheriey Fu-ness v State Green; Turbridge Wells v Can-terbury. UNLIET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Burgess Hill v Eastbourne Bown; Chichester v Whitehank; Languay Sports v Hasocks, Lattehampton v Selsey; Mile

Oak v Horsham YMCA; Pagham v Peace-haven & Telecombe; Redhill v Arundel; Salt-dean v Portfield; Shoreham v Ringmer; Wick v Hallsham.

HOVETA.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Annihorpe Weitere Malt-by MW; Brigg v Curzon Astion; Denaby v Hallam; Hudinally Pictoring; Liveraedge v Eccleshilt, North Ferriby v Ossett Town; Ossett Albion v Arnoltt, Pometract Collieries v Gaseshoughton Velifiers, Seby v Hatfeld Main; Sheiffeld v Thackley. Marri, Sherman v Mescaey.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First.

Division: Biscipcol Rovers v Burscoupt;
Citinano v Chedderton; Derven v Vasshell
GM; Hestingden v Wernington; Mahar Road
v St Helens, Nertwich v Glossop North Shot;
Nervossils Rover v Holker Old Boye; Prescot
Cables v Mossley. Remstoctom v Atherton
LR; Sallord v Rossendale.

Lift, Sakerd v. Hosserdae.

JEWSON WESSEK LEAGUE: Newbury v. Cowes Sports, Totton v. Gosport Borough; Andover v. Portamouth RN; Bournemouth PC v. Aerostructures; Brockenhurst v. Thatchern; Christohurch v. BAT Sports; Downton v. East. Cowes Vics.

Cowen Vics.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Divisions Clactor v Wrodnam; Dias v Gorlestor; Ely City v Stownstret; Fellostowe v Felstent; Geet Varnouth v Nieumerist; Herwich & Ferteston v Scham Town Rangen; Lowestort v Warderts; Woodbridge v Felenfram.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDILAND AL-ILANCE Barwell v Helsenwen Harriers; Bridgnorth v Boldmere St Michaele; Kingt Norton Town v Oldbury; Kropensley Victors v Chesetower; Passtore v Nest Michaele; Kingt Pallos; Rocester v Palest Ville; Sanded Borouch v Rushell Olympic; Strina v Bloowlet; Wednesdeld Vorget Ville; Browlet; Wichaeled Chrose v Chesetower; Passtore v Nest Michaele Chrocket v Palest Ville; Sanded Borouch v Rushell Olympic; Strina v Bloowlet; Wednesdeld V Stripernia; Wifernad v Stratord.

ford.

ARNOTY INSURANCE NORTHERN
LEAGUE First Division: Crock v Guisborough; Durham v Billingham Rown; Morpato
v Billingham Synthosis; Murton v RTM Newcastle, Northallerton v Jernoy; Seeham
Red Sav v Bedington Remark Shicton v Conpact; South Shields v Durston Federation
Breway; Stockton v Pennith. PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE Buckle Thistin V Wick Academy, Cove Rangers v Lossiamouth; Fort William v De-veronate; Huntly v Clachnacuddin; Potov-bard st King

WELSH CUP Quarter-finals; Bangar City v Caernerfon (20); Barry Town v THS Llansmiffield (20); Caersws v Newtown (20); Cornelia Curry Nomeds v Cwerbran (20) (ar

BASS IRISH CUP Quarter-finale: Armagh City v Glentorian (at the Oxal, Bellast); Cru-saders v Institute; Distillery v Glenaron; Lin-field v Portadown.

FIFTH TEST MATCH (Third day, inch.

Rugby League SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Quantil: Castleford v Sheffeld (2.30).

v Blackheeth (20).

JEWSON NATIONAL LEAGUE One: Leeds v Liverpool St Helens (30); London Welsh v Herrogate (245); Lydney v Worcester (30); Newburry v Puppy (20); Oley v Reading (30); Newburry v Puppy (30); Two North: Hindsley v Lichsled (30); Kondei v Aughtin (30); Preston Gresshold (30); Scarbridge v Sendley Park v Shelfled (30); Scarbridge v Sendled (30); Winnington Park v Nonsaton (30); Two Southe Bridgwater v Bethod (30); Chipmhan v Shelf (30); Chipmhan v Shelf (30); Chipmhan v Shelf (30); Chipmhan v Sher (30); Heathir v Bethog (30); Noston-super-Mane v Herriey (30).

WEI SH NATONAL LEAGUE Premier Div Sdj; Weston-super-Mare v Henley (3.0).
WEI SH NATTONAL LEAGUE Premiler Divisitor: Bridgend v Newport (kt); Swansee v Ebbe Vale (230; Fast Nation: Backwood v Newbridge (230); Bonymeen v UWC (Cerciff Institute) (230); Corpility v AberBlery (230); Cross (Nys v AberBlery (230); Cross (Nys v AberBlery (230); Cross (Nys v AberWeesteg (230); Runnay v Durwant (230); South Weies Police v Traoxiny (230).

Neeth (2.30).
TENNENTS SCOTTISH PRIVITERSHIP Division 1A: Currie v Hawks (2.0); West of Scotland v Metrose (2.0). Division 13: Boroughnuir v Stiring County (3.0); Jed-Forest v Heriots FP (3.0). Division 2A: Dundhe HSFP v Kimemock (2.0); Galax v Gesgow Hawks (3.0). Division 2B: Bogger v Kirkshidy (3.0); Peibles v Mozseburgh (3.0), Division 2A: Grangemouth v Gordonians (3.0); Stewart's Melville FP v Selikis (3.0). Division 3B: Hahead/Jordanhii v Gissgow Southern (3.0); Stewarty v Ayr (3.0);
ALIK IRISSH I FRAGUE First Division:

WELSH CHALLENGE TROPHY Semi-fi-nata: Cardiff v Llanell (230): Portypridd v Neath (230).

Baskethali BUDWESSER LEAGUE Derby Storm v Sheffield Sharles (730); Westord Royale v Re-naut Lelequer Rides (730); Thamas Valley Tigars v Chestor Jets (80); Worthing Bears v Newcaste Eagles (80).

Hockey
MEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Barfard Tighra v Canterbury (120);
Beeston v Guildford (130); Cermock v
Soutingsie 223; Doncaster v Teddington
(130), First Division: Brooklands v Lewes
(20); Chelmsford v Bournville (225); Firsbrands v Sheffield (10); Hampstead & Westminster v Surtison (20); Huß v Bluetharts (20);
Indian Gyndelsne v Bourniley (130); loce v
Oxford University (1230); Loughborough Students v Oxford Hawise (230); St Albans v
Gloucester City (10); Stourport v Harlaston
Meggles (230); Norman V Harlaston
Meggles (230); Norman V Chester;
Soutisport v Harrogaez; Swallwel v Wigen.
DTZ MEDLAND Prantimer: Harrogar-h-Ardien
v Bloesofth; Harborne v Hortin Staffort: Mortin
Notts v Khales; Northampton Saints v
Governy & North Varwick, Nottingham v
Bloesomhald; Otion & West Warwick v Edgbeston. Hockey

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Pro

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Slough v bewich; Cifron Scotlish Life v Fightown fat Bristol University, Countie Displey; Sutton Coldifield v Tojans; Doncester v Often Terraquest, Frest Division: Centerbury v Otternstord Highwey; Windledon v Loughborough Students; Bracknell v Leicester; Sunderland Bedans v Bractford Swittnerburk. Second Division: Old Loughtonians v Payrans; Wast Winner v Wolking Swifts; Eding v Blueharts; Aldridge v Sherwood. (All. Women's National Leegue games start at 1.30). WOMEN'S NORTH Division One: Cheeter v Liverponi Sefton; Leylands Notors v Wal-lon; Sheffeld v Winnington Park; York v Black-burn.

WOMEN'S WEST Premier: Bounemouth v Colveti; Cheharham v Redand; Leomin-ster v Exater; St Austell v Exmouth; Yate v Rumbn Vale.

AUTHOR VEIC.
ROYAL AL-FAISAL WOMEN'S MEDIAND
Premier: Cireson Remblars v Lutor; Hempton in Arden v Belber; North Staffs v Leicester; Pickwick v Kettering. ter incount of Kettering.
WOMEN'S SOUTH Division One: Hamp-stead & Westminster v Hendor; Horshem v Winchmore Hit; Reading - Outwich; Lisse Hill v Southempton; Winchester v Maxienhead. v Southenpeor; who needs or vision these court TRYSPORTS WOMEN'S THREE COURT TRYSPORTS WOMEN'S THREE COURT TRYSPORTS WIS Orderd v Reneingt; Famburn Common v Reading; Hanley v Oxford Hanks, Macienheed v Somming, Newbury v Millan Klynet; Windsor v Wiest Witney; Manage Court Milland Kamber (1)

ice hockey SUPERLEAGUE PLAY-OFFS Group A Nottingham Panthers v Newcassile Cobra (70); Sheffield Steeters v Ayr Scottleh Es gles (70); Group B: Besingshee Beson Brackmell Bess (E.30); Manchester Signm Carolif Devis (70).

Other sports ATHLETICS: Negional Cross-country Chart BADMINTON: All England Chemicic

MING: World Cup svent (SI

TOMORROW Rugby League

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Quarter-fi-nale: London v Hull Kingston Rovers (20); Selford v Hull (20); Wigen v St Helens (145). RÜGBY LEAGUE First Division: Feather-stonis v Widnes (40); Keightey v Leigh (30); Rochdele v Devisbury (30); Swinton v Hun-sict (30); Waltofield v Winterhaven (40). FRIENDLY: Barrow v Warrington (3.D.

Rugby Union ALLISO DUNBAR PREMIDERSHIP ONE: Gloucester v Saracens (3.0); Wasps v Lon-don krish (3.0).

Hockey EHA CUP Semi-finals: Beeston v Chiches (130); Carmock v Canterbury (20). NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division; East Grissead v Old Loughtoniens (20); Houston Haven slow v Reading (20); St Albens v Hampstead v Westington (20); St Albens v Hampstead

Baskethall

ice hockey SUPERLEAGUE PLAY-OFFS: Group A: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Notinghern Panthers (630); Sheffeld Steelers v Newcastle Co-bras (830), Group B: Bradnel Bees v Mar-chester Storm (6.0); Cardiff Devils v Basingstoke Bison (6.0).

Other sports SWEARING: World Cup event (Shelfiel

Doldrums hold the key for Smith

Sailing By Stuart Alexander

FTVE down, four to go, and the name of the Whitbread game is to catch Paul Cayard as the fleet leave sultry São Sebastião today for the tricky, 4,750mile sixth leg from Brazil to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Cayard, the American skipper of the Swedish boat EF Language, has combined some fast learning, clever navigation, and a strengthening crew to win three legs so far and build a lead of nearly 100 points over Grant Dalton in the Monaco-flagged Merit Cup.

The only reason for a frown on Cayard's brow is the worry that he has been unable to fit a new mast, because the spare was air-freighted to the tip of South America for the team's other boat, the all-woman-crewed EF Education, after they had been dismasted on the approach to Cape Horn.

The women had just three days of respite after motorsailing the last 1,000 miles and shared with Britain's Lawrie 🦸 Smith only a short preparation period. Smith was also dismasted on the last leg and was able to restart sailing again only on Wednesday after a new mast had been fitted.

Smith is under pressure to out in some big results, if only to restore the pride and esteem of a team who started as one of the favourites but are seventh overall. He points to the Doldrums as the major hurdle of the leg. "You have to be in the lead after the Doldrums to win," he said.

Dalton, confident that his broken collar-bone is mending sufficiently well to allow him to perform light duties, agrees, but his dilemma is whether to sail more miles to find better wind well offshore, or hug the shorter route up the coast of Brazil,

brand old one

He wants to attack Cayard. but knows he will have to fight to defend his second place against Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match and Chessie Racing, which has John Kosteeki back as skipper.

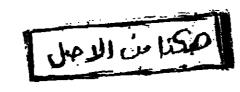
Two of the nine boats - Innovation Kvaerner and Toshiba - have decided to sail with 11, instead of the maximum 12 crew. WHITEREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE WHI 1945-LD HOUND THE WORLD RACE Standings after five legs: 1 EF Language (See) P Cayard 50/7px; 2 Merit Cup (Moreco) G Dafon 49; 3 Swedish Mater (Swe) G Krantz 404; 4 Chessie Racing (US) J Kostecki 399; 5 Innovation Kraemer (Nor) K Rostacki 372; 6 Toshibe (US) P Standbridge 236; 7 Sik Cut (GS) L Smith 284; 8 Brunel Surregy (Neth) R Heiner 215; 9 EF Education (Swe) C Guillou 199.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

 The England women cricketers were continually referred to as lesbians and dykes... They said one woman needed to have her legs prised open with a cricket bat. Teresa Harrild, former Lord's receptionist, who won her sex discrimination case this week

You cannot take him seriously any longer, i don't know where he's going next but if it's Malta then he'll say Malta should stage the World Cup. Wolfgang Niersbach, German tootball federation spokesman, on João Havelange's apparent support for England's 2006 World Cup bid.

ithink iam who lam, hopefully, and that's the way it is. Colin Montgomerie, golfer.



Doldrums

hold the key

for Smith

Whose game is it anyway?

Another week another round of bloodletting in English rugby union's open civil war. If it wasn't so pathetic it would be funny, writes

Chris Hewett START by taking all the available hypocrisy, chicanery, secrecy and misinformation and mix in some power politics, a pinch of paranoia and a dash of playground petulance. Now add a monster helping of selfimportance, season with a few outright lies - great big whoppers of the

season - and hey presto, there you have it: English rugby union, 1998style. Half Watergate, half Alan Partridge.

Thanks to the chronic mistrust between the major players in the internecine struggle between the professional clubs and their governing body, the standard of debate has been puerile in the extreme. There was an illuminating moment last Monday when Fran Cotton. one of the few central characters in this ongoing pantomime to retain a sense of humour, reacted to allegations by Chris Wright, the millionaire owner of Wasps, that he had been actively luring fresh-faced teenagers away from the contractual clutches of talent-hunting Premiership outfits. "Bloody hell," muttered the Rugby Football Union's vice-chairman. "They've called me a bully, they've accused me of ethnic cleansing and now they want to do me for importuning. Where will it all end?"

Where indeed? This much is certain: there will be no semblance of a conclusion while Cliff Brittle, chairman of the RFU's management board, continues to massage his various obsessions in public. Twice this week, Brittle has given vent to his feelings in the most extraordinary fashion, charging the clubs with all manner of sedition and dirty-trickery before, in the very next instant, brandishing leaked copies of private letters written by his bete noir, Sir John Hall, and boasting of "moles" deep in the heart of the Premiership axis. Openness, honesty and integrity, en:

Yet if the game is no nearer a solution, the issues have at least been crystallised. Two contrasting ideals stand side by side in the public domain - Cotton's wide-ranging "Club England" document and the owner- sentation at Twickenham on Thurswhile the cynics have been quick to point out that rugby literature now Testament, there is no better cata-

investors' "Club Charter" - and day, there are a good few acres of common ground between the two camps. Both sides recognise the cencontains more visions than the Old tral importance of the England national team to the well-being of the lyst for substantive negotiations than domestic game, both agree that the the publication of rival blueprints. Premiership can and should evolve As Cotton agreed during his care- into the strongest professional club ful, if ultimately bad-tempered pre-structure in world rugby and both ac-ment is not about the what, but the planet-sized King Edward, molten to convinced of their claim to the moral

heart of Northampton's laughably mishandled attack on this summer's tour of the southern hemisphere. Cotton wants a 35-game limit for the Test élite while the clubs envisage a maximum of 39.

But this deeply damaging argu-

knowledge the urgent need to act on how; both documents contain practice the touch - is the contractual wranplayer burn-out, the issue at the tical, eminently workable proposals gle over Clive Woodward's England that are pure anathema to those on the opposite side of the great divide and without a grand-scale aban-

squad. Cotton is adamant that the best players should sign with the union -We can never, ever allow a repeat donment of carefully considered of the Northampton problem," he operational principles, there is no growled this week - while the clubs, earthly chance of an accommodation. profoundly embarrassed by the The hottest potato in the sack -a Franklins Gardens fiasco but no less

retain the all-important thumbprints, subject to the safeguard of agreed international release periods.

What the clubs want

during the domestic season, all of them

tions to be moved to the spring. Tours

with the clubs rather than the union. in-

divisional or provincial rugby.

The proof of the pudding will be in the signing, as it were. Although both Brittle and Cotton have denied making any bank-breaking contractual approach to Lawrence Dal- treated like grown-ups. Are you lislaglio, the England captain, the club tening, Mr Brittle?

high ground, insist on their right to

owners, including Dallaglio's emplayers at Wasps, have dismissed those denials as so much builshine. Wisely, Dallaglio has maintained an aimost regal silence on the subject. but some of his senior international colleagues, notably Jeremy Guscon, have backed the status quo. Cotton has an awful lot of persuading to do if he is to win them over.

Only slightly less important but much more urgent is the collision over Europe. The clubs say next season's Heineken Cup is a financial disaster waiting to happen and want no part of it; Cotton considers it a gem of a competition which, were it to involve rather more English-qualified players, might even persuade him to shelve his long-standing passion for divisional rugby. As things stand, the players will reach the start of next season with two different fixture lists on the table. Chaos, or what?

There are a million and one other points of conflict. Foremost among them are the clubs' declared intention of establishing themselves as an independent body with negotiating rights over broadcasting and sponsorship deals; their proposal to shift the Five Nations' Championship to a new starting date in midspring, and Cotton's radical and spectacularly inflammatory franchise plan, which would deny some of the biggest clubs in England a place in their own Premiership.

But the central argument is a philosophical one concerning the precise nature, the very essence, of the game in this country. In a magazine article published this week, Brittle let slip his guard by saying: "The total financial success of the RFU depends on one thing, the success of England. People are not interested in the clubs. What people are interested in is the national team."

If he is right - if domestic rugby is driven by Woodward's team and that alone - Cotton is perfectly justified in his revolutionary replanting of the English rugby landscape.

His ideology has been drawn largely from the orthodoxy currently in vogue in New Zealand, where the All Black jersey carries all before it. the Super 12 provinces are tightly controlled by NZRFU appointees and the National Provincial Championship, the bread and butter domestic competition, grows more marginalised by the day. This year, 95 per cent of the All Black squad will be ordered to rest rather than

Which is all fine and dandy unless, like thousands of regular rugby supporters from Bath in the South-west to Newcastle in the North-east, you happen to think that the traditional tribalism of English club rugby is something to cherish. Some £30m worth of investment says that Hall, Wright, Nigel Wray, Keith Barwell and their fellow owners believe club rugby to be central to the overall package, not peripheral. If nothing else, they deserve to be

Scottish RU sign up Metcalfe



Old friends and old enemies send their teams into battle

By Chris Hewett

IT used to be the match of the season, a 24-carat humdinger with everything - personal pride, the destination of the league title, the price of bread and the long-term future of the human race - riding on the outcome, Newcastle and Saracens have gatecrashed the private party over the last eight months but whenever Bath and Leicester appear simultaneously on the same rectangle of mud, the competitive fires burn anew.

Outte simply, there is no love lost. As Austin Healey, the Leicester Lip. said in January after watching Bath relieve Brive of the Heineken Cup: our remaining games and look coaching career.

an English side can call themselves European champions at last, but why in the name of Christ does it have to be them?"

You get the feeling that both clubs would rather nominate Cliff Brittle for the Nobel Peace prize than acknowledge each other's successes.

The Bath coach, Andy Robinson, appeared to be steering well clear of the usual barbed one-upmanship as he assessed the prospects yesterday. "This year's title is out of our hands, just as it's out of Leicester's hands," he pointed out. "We're in the pursuing pack, both of us. and all we can hope to do is win

"I'm absolutely delighted that for Newcastle and Saracens to slip up somewhere along the no favours from his rival - Robinway." It was only then that he son flatly refused to reveal his worked the knife under the Tigers' skin by saying: "Still, at would "have to get used to the least we've got a trophy from the

> season." Ouch. ago, Robinson gathered a perfectly weighted scoring pass from a certain Dean Richards and claimed the try that made any easier by the sendingclinched a famous England victory over the French at Twickenham. Tomorrow, the former back-row confreres will renew their acquaintance on the Recreation Ground touchline as Richards undertakes the most testing challenge of his fledgling

line-up, commenting that Deano little trials that are part and parcel of a coach's life" - and the Almost exactly nine years Leicester legend freely admitted that the new job was turning out to be every bit as demanding as originally feared. It was not off of Martin Corry during last week's derby punch-up with Northampton and yesterday,

Predictably, he was receiving

land flanker for a fortnight. Newcastle, the title favourites, travel to Richmond this afternoon with a full hand of Scottish

Richards and his fellow Welford

Road chiefs suspended the Eng-

internationals. Doddie Weir, ability that is keeping us where all return after missing the close shave against Sale in midweek and two points against the fastsubsiding Londoners will return Rob Andrew and company to the top of the table.

However, the lead will change hands again tomorrow if Saracens survive what is certain to be a hairy afternoon against Gloucester and while real mugger's alley this season, Andrew expects them to do just that. "Both Saracens and ourselves are proving adept at sneaking wins - we've both been squeezing home by four or

five points of late - and it's that

Gary Armstrong and Alan Tait we are." he said. "Yes, we've got games in hand. But having them and winning them are two different things. It's a very, very tough Premiership this year."

Tough? Just ask Aadel Kardooni, the former Leicester scrum-half who.is - or, rather, was - helping Bedford continue their runaway surge to the Allied Dunbar Premiership Two title. A burglary at Kardooni's Kingsholm is proving to be a flat prevented him from making an important training session at Goldington Road and as a result, Bedford's eversympathetic director of rugby,

Geoff Cooke, dropped him from today's home game with Wakefield, Charming.

until the 1999 World Cup

By Chris Hewett

Player contracts may be the insurmountable stumbling block to rugby harmony in England, but the most talked-about prospect in the Scottish game knows exactly which side his bread is buttered. Glenn Metcalfe, a New Zealand-born full-back who can also play on the wing, has signed a deal with the Scottish Rugby Union taking him through to the end of next year's World Cup.

Metcalfe, who pitched up at Glasgow Hawks this season via Glasgow Academicals and debut against the Welsh secondstring a week ago and cut to another Borders triumph.

enough ice to lure big-spending Newcastle, However, his union deal takes him out of reach of any English Premiership side for

another 18 months. Melrose, meanwhile, will take a decisive step towards a third successive Tennent's Premiership title if they win their first play-off match against West of Scotland at Burnbrae today. Bryan Redpath, Scott Nichol. Scott Aitken, Graham Shiel and Nick Broughton are on their casualty list, but Craig Chalmers and Rowen Shepherd return from international duty and with Waikato, made his Scotland A a 49-7 victory over West already in the bag, the tea-leaves point

The 45 minutes squandered would have been better spent drilling a hole in my skull



CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV

was me last Monday night, barking those murderous obscenities while I trashed my living room and threw the telly out of the window. I apologise, and promise it won't happen again. You can be sure of that, because I won't be watching On Side any more.

You'd think the people responsible (producer Paul Davies, editor Philip Bernie - why shouldn't they be called to account?) might have learnt one or two lessons from the first series a few months ago. But nothing has changed: still too many guests, and still with John Inverdale, the thinking person's Terry Christian, on hand to ensure that questions of any consequence are avoided at all costs.

When you think who the BBC could have press-ganged into lending an air of gravitas, however bogus, causing emotional distress and mis- Hansen were drinking orange juice, of those classic quantification ques-

AN open letter to my neighbours: it handling our licence money. Des Ly- while Merson, the reformed boozer, tions so beloved of sports interview- Richardson's interview with Marvin room full of champagne. I was emwas me last Monday night, barking nam, Barry Davies... John Inverdale. had water. Why? Was some kind of ers: "How proud are you to have tak- Hagler in Rome. Though it was in- barrassed for Merson, whose bonest. It reminds me of a poster I saw a couple of years ago for the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park: SHAKESPEARE'S

COMEDY OF ERRORS THE TEMPEST PAINT YOUR WAGON

The opening set-piece established the benchmark for fatuousness. They had each of the studio guests, Ilie Nastase, Ashia Hansen and Paul Merson, standing at a swanky bar staring glumly into his or her drink. What was the intention here? Set-ups like this usually have some relevance to the neople involved. The only possible connection I could think of is that one of them is a recovering alcoholic which was surely not what the mak-

significance intended? And why were en part in that fight?" How do you they told to remain motionless as if paralysed by existential dread? Somebody's idea of adding a spurious resonance to an otherwise catastrophically flimsy show?

First up was Nastase, who was asked virtually nothing of any interest whatsoever. There were a couple of sentences about his aspiring political career in Romania - "if I'd known before what was going on I wouldn't have got into it" - while when asked about sport in post-cold war eastern Europe, he replied, "It's going to die."

They were joined on satellite link by Ice Frazier in Philadelphia, on the anniversary of his victory over ers had in mind. What was also Muhammad Ali at Madison Square it makes you want to sue them for strange was the fact that Nasrase and Garden. Inverdale kicked off with one plodes. That's my theory, anyway.

answer that? "Oh, about 4.3 International Pride Units"?

To be fair to Inverdale (if I must), that sort of nonsense is hardly his preserve, but he does have his own special brand of gaucheness. "Can you tell us about your left arm, which is all crooked?" is the kind of question arch piss-taker Chris Morris might have asked on Brass Eye, that fabulous news magazine parody from a couple of years ago. It wasn't all bad. There was some nice banter - when Frazier asked Nastase if he could give him some tennis lessons, he replied, "I will if you come to Romania and beat up all the politicians." But the human brain can only take so much fluffiness and cosiness before it ex-

There was more of it in Gary trophy be passed round the dressing-

as a bad guy in Italian action flicks. the mateyness was splattered all over the screen. The Americans talk about "the hairball factor" (think a programme that seems determined to bonour the spirit of the sillier bits of Sports Review of the Year.

Hansen and Merson fared no better, Inverdale spending 3min 39sec There was more Chris Morris to savour. "There is still something comic about the hop, step and jump", for example. No. No there isn't. His opening gambit with Merson was also a gent, as he inquired what the Middlesbrough player would do should the First Division Championship

teresting to see what Marvelous serious approach was horribly offset Marvin is up to, establishing a career by the bantering tone. Inverdale wrapped up the interview by telling him, "In the words of the song, you were knocked down and got back up again," a crass and clumsy reference Friends), and it's perfectly suited to to Chumbawumba's No 1 drinking song. Nice touch, that, when you're interviewing an alcoholic. He just meant it as a bit of fun, I

guess. Maybe it's just me, maybe I've turned into a sour old git, but I want and Smin 56sec respectively on them. more. I want to be made to think, I want to be surprised. I don't want to feel that the 45 minutes squandered on watching On Side would have been better spent drilling a hole in my skull and sucking my brains out. Anybody who required even a minimal sense of having their horizons expanded would have ended up last Monday like me, screaming at the screen.







Dark Blues extend their winning streak

triumph. It may not quite have been Twick-enham, but a healthy crowd enjoyed the Light Blues (bottom centre) a rumbustious atmosphere, the beer and the obligatory streaker, whose bravado was, it seems, fuelled at one of Cambridge's drinking societies.
With due sense of theatre perhaps,
he delayed his entry until the second

haif and the players apparently found his antics "all jolly good fun". Oxford's ability to extend their winning streak was helped by a scrum and line-out that had a professional look about them. The
Dark Blues former captain Jo Hudson (1995-96, bottom left) must have
9171-293-2534.

THE 11th women's Varsity rugby union match took place at Iffley Road last Sunday with Oxford extending their sequence of victories to 10 with a comprehensive 22-5 enjoyed her view from the touch-line as Oxford overwhelmed their tivals through tries from Jacqui Street, with two, the Swedish international Ulrika Andersson and Lucy Mackillop.

Pre-match attention to detail by came to nothing in the attempt to curtail the catalogue of catastrophe.

At times Oxford seemed almost to have gained a passing resemblance to the All Blacks or so it may have seemed to spectators, whether inebriated, intrigued or merely enthusiastic.

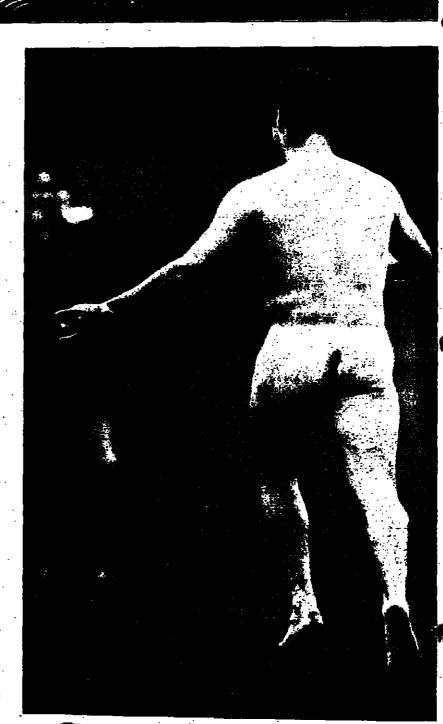
1Copies of these photographs - and any others by the Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam - can be ordered by telephoning

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT HALLAM



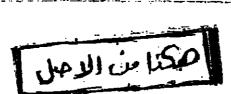








sampras de la sampras poli





PETE SAMPRAS' world No 1 status is in doubt after he lost 7-5, 6-3 to the unseeded Austrian Thomas Muster in the ATP Champions' Cup in Cali-

The victory for Muster, a former world No 1 himself, now ranked 20th, means the Australian Open champion, Petr Korda, can take top place with a win at Indian Wells. Korda. the second seed, beat the German teenager Tommy Haas 7-6, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals on Thursday.

Sampras was not the only big name to fall in the third round. Andre Agassi, who has worked his way up to 40th in the world from 141st last November, beat the third-seeded Australian Pat Rafter, the reigning US Open champion 6-33-66-2. Agassi will face the lowest-ranked player left in the draw, the 126th-ranked wild card, Jan-Michael Gambill.

But Sampras' defeat, by a player who had won just one of his three matches all year, Lapentti of Ecuador 6-1, 6-4.

ful," admitted Sampras. "I really seeded Chilean Marcelo Rios in struggled throughout the whole match. I had some chances in the first, had a set point. Had some love-30 points."

Sampras, the Champions' a beaten quarter-finalist in 1996 and in the second round last year, said he still had not mastered the desert conditions. "I Bohdan Ulibrach. don't know what it is about the conditions here," he said. "The ball seems to fly on me. I can't and have control of the ball."

Muster, who disputed the world No 1 place with Sampras in 1996, and grabbed the top spot for six weeks that year, said he could tell Sampras was struggling. He said: "You always play like your opponent allows you to play. But he wasn't serving as accurate as he used to. He made a lot of unforced errors. For whatever reason I don't know."

In the quarter-finals, Muster will face the Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev, who beat Nicolas

a repeat of the Australian Open final Rios defeated German Nicolas Kiefer 6-4, 6-3.

The sinth-seeded Briton, Greg Rusedski, advanced with Cup winner in 1994 and 1995 but a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Spain's Carlos Moya, setting up a clash with unseeded Swede Thomas Enqvist, a 6-2, 7-6 winner over

"I was very pleased with the way I played," said Rusedski, who had a first-round bye beplay the way I want to play, can't fore struggling to a 4-6, 6-3, 6-swing the way I want to swing, 4 victory over Vince Spadea. I serv ed a lot better, played a more solid overall game and fixed up a few areas I wasn't pleased with."

Rusedski, who has beaten the 25th-ranked Enqvist in three of their four previous encounters, served 12 aces and Moya never had a chance to break his opponent's serve. A strained left hamstring ruined Steffi Graf's latest come-

back from injury when she re-

tired in the third set of her Evert

Cup semi-final match with

Lindsay Davenport, Graf, who

during her career, was trailing 6-4, 4-6, 4-2 to Davenport, the defending champion. Graf, 28, was playing in only her second tournament after taking nine months off after knee surgery. "It's like, what else?" said

has had a long list of ailments

Graf, who has numbered a bad back, bone spurs in her feet and the broken cartilage and tom tendon in her left knee that forced the surgery last June among her injuries. A hamstring strain was a new

experience. "This one I haven't had before," said Graf, who felt a pain after a sudden movement in the fifth game of the third set. She winced and clutched her thigh, but finished the game. After having her thigh strapped during the change-over, she tried to play, earning a break point against Davenport in the sixth game even though she was hobbled by the pain.

"The minute it happened I knew," said Graf. "I always try. I almost made the game. I almost had a chance. But just standing there I was scared to



No pain, no gain: Steffi Graf has her leg strapped in a vain attempt to prolong her semi-final

Fit Crutchley

gives boost

to Cannock

MARTIN GILBODY, Can-

nock's manager, was philo-

sophical about their tough

weekend, six of his players hav-

ing returned only on Tuesday

from the Azlan Shah Cup in

The good news for Can-

nock is that the leading National

League goalscorer, Bobby

Crutchley, who pulled out of the

Malaysia trip on the eve of de-

parture when he limped off at

Hounslow after scoring a hat-

Hockey

By Bill Colwill

Regal Ramprakash defies the odds ON THIS tour of the West Indies, Mark Ramprakash But not Ramprakash. He

Cricket: Fifth Test

character which many cricketers would have failed. After contributing substantially to England's victory at The Oval last August, he had every right to expect he would be a regular member of the side in the West Indies.

John Crawley had been dropped for that Test but by the time England arrived

Ramprakash sidered for a Test place at the start of the tour and if Crawley had been even moderately successful, his chance may never have come.

Crawley's selection was a clear case of nepotism by the 64 not out and 34. powerful Lancashire contingent running this tour. Captain Mike Atherton seems to get his way regardless over just about everything while David Lloyd, the coach, and Bob Bennett, the manager, are also red rose stalwarts. Their up for what it was; a damaging piece of misjudgement.

There was nothing Ramprakash could do about it except wait. I can think of

has come through a test of kept his composure and his sense of humour, and made sure he would be ready if and when the call came.

In the third Test in Port of Spain it did come. Adam Hollioake's back ruled him out and Ramprakash was chosen but he woke up on the

morning of the match with flu. But still Ramprakash kept his sense of proportion here in January, he had al- and he continued to work at ready been pencilled in as his cricket. A score of 60 on HENRY against Guyana

was not even con- BLOFELD when it was thought he had been caught behind before he had half a dozen, won him a place in the Georgetown Test. He fought hard in both innings on a difficult pitch for

Now, at Kensington Oval, he has made his first Test 100 to rescue England from what seemed to be an unmitigated disaster. Now that the biggest psychological barrier of all has been eliminated, he will make a great many more choice of Crawley was shown runs and hundreds for his country who, I believe, he will go on to captain.

His latest achievement must be seen against this background to be fully many who would have appreciated.

Batsmen can enjoy

his heyday. It took Sir Clyde only an

Cannock, three points anear of Canterbury at the top of the Premier, today entertain Southdraw".

Chichester are the first club

The Women's National

old-fashioned pitch THIS is Kensington Oval as witness the outstanding bats-

it used to be. This is a pitch men of the day treat you to that reminds old-timers of an exhibition of stroke play. great batsmen produced by this tiny island of Barbados used to feast themselves against bowlers from wher-

Sir Clyde Walcott, like Sir Everton Weekes and Seymour Nurse, punished as

morning, even as

many of those in recent

coincided with the emergence of the great fast bowling quartets which were to be the backbone of West Indian domination of world cricket in the 1980s.

Prior to that you would pay your money and come to Kensington knowing full

mere drawers of water and hewers of wood.

Of the 10 Tests between 1955 and 1974 nine were totals over 600 and seven over 500.

lated the longest innings in Test COZIER cricket, remaining

999 minutes for his 337 in

Sixteen years later Lawrence Rowe took his

memorable 302 off England and the likes of Sir Garry Sobers, Bob Simpson, Bill Lawry and Worrell helped themselves to double cen-

and Graham Thorpe mounted their restorative partnership towards the end of the first day and into the second, the prospects of similar run gluttony were real. Brian Lara, Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Carl Hooper would have been licking their chops in anticipation of scores that were impossible on the inferior pitches earlier in the

Bullets and Sharks leaning on Towers

Basketball

By Richard Taylor

BIRMINGHAM Bullets and Sheffield Sharks are depending on London Towers to boost their Budweiser League title chances this weekend by beating Greater London Leopards at Wembley tomorrow night.

Bullets and Sharks both have the chance of a double-win weekend, while Towers are desperate to compensate for slipping out of spoiling the chances of their rivals, champions the Leopards.

a 76-72 midweek win over the Sharks and tomorrow play Derby Storm, who play Sheffield tonight. "Derby are a scary team and if their crowd get going it's the proverbial cauldron," Sharks' coach, Chris Finch, said. Derby, though, are likely to be without Tony Windless, who will also miss next weekend's All Star Game

with a thigh injury. Apart from seeing the title slip away, Towers also lost in the Uniball League Trophy final against Sheffield last weekend. But championship contention by Leopards coach, Billy Mims, said: "I don't think that will be the league leaders and defending a factor by the time they play us."

Laszlo Nemeth's fate as Eng-After Birmingham lost to land's coach will be decided to-Leopards last weekend, American by the English Basketball can Tony Dorsey said. We have Association board. Nameth was to win our last nine games flow.

Nothing less will do.

Association board. Nameth was a separate two weeks ago for critical transfer of the care of the control of the care of

Rasmussen's record package

Badminton

THE world champion, Peter most dramatic matches the Rasmussen, has signed a record sponsorship deal which could earn him more than £300,000 in the next two and a half years. The Dane will receive a re-

scheme which will make him the highest-paid player in the hisbacking Rasmussen in a racket, clothing and luggage endorsement package which will see him through the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

The 23-year-old enjoyed his biggest success to date last year, when he won the World Cham-

pionship in Glasgow, beating Sun Jun of China in one of the sport has known.

A spokesman for Carlton said: "Peter's game went from strength to strength in 1997 and with our support we are sure he tainer in addition to a bonus can go on to even greater success, crowning his world title with more Grand Prix titles in tory of badminton. Carlton are 1999 and an Olympic gold medal in Sydney."

Rasmussen is currently out with an ankle injury but he hopes to be fit for next month's European Championships in Bulgaria and the Thomas Cup finals in Hong Kong in May.

Maggert seizes early one-stroke lead

THE American Ryder Cup player Jeff Maggert, who missed the cut in his past two events, fired a five-under-par 67 to grab a one-stroke lead after the first round of the PGA Honda Classic.

Maggert, whose lone PGA title came at the 1993 Disney Classic, holed a seven-iron from 185 yards for an eagle on the par-four sixth hole and added five birdies to offset a pair of bogeys.

Long-driving John Daly and fellow American Stewart Cink were one stapke off the pace. Scotland's Coin Montgomerie and the torus winder Steve Pate' are another stocke back at 69.

Montgomerie, still seeking his first win on the US PGA months after another stint in al- playing pretty well," Maggert tour, had birdies at two of the cobol rehabilitation.

By John Oakley

in Agadir

final three holes. Daly, trying for his first win

ON THURSDAY it was the

wind that blew Seve Balles-

teros off course and up to 13

over par after 12 holes played

into the teeth of a gale at the

Moroccan Open. Yesterday a

stomach upset forced the Ryder

Cup captain to retire without

also withdrew, leaving 68 other

players to complete their first

rounds yesterday, some with

Denmark's Steen Tinning

hitting another ball.

holism, started on the 10th hole and tore up the back nine with four birdies. But he played the front side at even par and settled for second.

"This is the best I've felt about my game ever," said Daly, whose four career victories including triumphs at the 1991 PGA Champiouship and 1995 British Open. In addition to alcohol problems still fights food cravings.

It was the 17th time in his last 18 rounds that Daly has shot par or better, a streak that has earned him a tie for fourth in Los Angeles and three other finishes in the top 20. He has won \$204,850 (£125,000) in six starts,

well," he said. "I practice and I'll get over the hump."

battle through atrocious weath-

er conditions. In all, 48 players

failed to break 80; three were in

the 90s, and only six of the play-

ers unfortunate enough to be

drawn in the second half of the

field managed sub-par rounds.

ideal conditions yesterday morn-

ing, equalled the course record

with 64, eight under par, still lead-

ing by three shots from Mathias

Gronberg, of Sweden, and Pedro

Linhart, of Spain. Close behind

It all left Des Smyth, who, in

horrendous scores after their Raymond Burns, the German

were Smyth's Irish compatriot to go out first in the second.

Cricket

Ballesteros pulls out of desert purgatory

since his latest bout with alco- am doing the right things each day. The cravings for food have been tough, so I'm not going to worry about my weight."

Sixteen others are three behind Maggert, including the defending champion, Stuart Appleby of Australia, the 1987 champion, Mark Calcavecchia, Vijay Singh of Fiji, Bernhard Langer of Germany and the US veteran Join Watson, runner-up

in his prior 1998 events. Single appears set to extend the PGA's longest current streak of consecutive cuts made to 51.

Maggert gained momentum trick in their last League game with a short birdie putt at the should be fit for the game. Doubts surround Justin Pidseventh and a 35-foot birdie on cock, who was running a temthe ninth, then finished with birdies on two par-five holes, the perature yesteruay. nearly twice as much as he won 14th and 16th, sinking a 10-footlast year when he missed two er on the latter. "I have been said. "It does bug me that I've "I've been hitting it very only won once. Sooner or later

Alex Cejka and Australia's

Stephen Leaney, all of whom

shot 68 before the gale force wind

developed yesterday and forced

play to be abandoned with half

tions were again ideal, calm and

sunny. Those completing their

opening rounds had only a 20-

minute break before starting

their second rounds because,

under the rules, the second half

of the field in the first round have

Yesterday morning condi-

the field still on the course.

gate, who will be missing Soma Singh, in the league and tomorrow will be at home to Canterbury in the semi-final of the EHA Cup.

> outside the National League ever to reach the Cup semi-finals and have to travel north to Beeston for the second semifinal. Although they will start as underdogs, they will face a Beeston side, who have a relegation game against Guildford tomorrow.

League comes to a close today with Slough already Premier champions, Leicester having clinched the Division One title and with Aldridge needing just a point to gain promotion from the Second Division.

the days when the many Bowlers were reduced to

ever they came.

hour on the first

England were tottering, to proclaim: "This looks to 1958. me like a 500 per innings There have not been

times, in fact not since 1977. That was the period when the authorities became fedup with a succession of high-scoring stalemates and decided to inject some life into the lifeless surface It was also a period that

well that you were going to series.

drawn. There were three It was here that Pakistan's many attacks as anyone in Hanif Mohammed accumu-

As Mark Ramprakash

Sporting Digest

Nicol survives as seeds tumble out

AUSTRIA

BULGARIA

CANADA

FRANCE

Serra Nevada

rapahoe Basin ___Firm packed snov

PETER NICOL, the world No 1, one was the sole seed to survive the quarter-finals as a series of upsets' surrounded his progress into the last four of the Austrian Open in Linz yesterday. Even the Scot had to fight for his place in the semis, com-

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15-6, 15-9, 15-9.

The Australian world cham-No 2, went down in another five-game marathon, relinquishing a 2-1 lead to lose 15-

AROUND THE RESORTS

Much improved at all lenets

Snow cannon back in action

ing from two games down to 12, 11-15, 16-17, 15-5, 15-13 to beat Alex Gough, the fifth- the English world doubles seeded Welsh No 1, 13-15, 8-15, champion, Mark Cairns, who was only in the draw as a lucky loser because Jansher Khan, of pion, Rodney Eyles, seeded Pakistan, withdrew from the event at the last minute to

165 167

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ALL-ENGLAND CHAMPHONSHIPS (Eltraingham) liven's singles quertes-finales: Ong
Eve Hock (Maley) but H Arbi (Indon) 17-55 55-5-5. Sun, Jun (Ch) b't Yong Hock Kin (Maley) 5-4
5-2; H Hendrawun (Indon) bt J von Dijk
(Neth) walt-over, Luo Yigang (Ch) bt Ohen
Hong (Ch) 5-2
5-5. Wommen's singles
quarter-finales Gong Zhichao (Ch) bt Kim Jhyun (5 Kor) 11-3
11-2; Ye Zheoying (Ch) bt M
Auding (Indon) 11-5
11-8; Zheng Ning (Ch) bt
Dai Yun (Ch) 22-9
7-11
11-11 **Backethall**

NBA: Marri 97 Cleveland 74; Deltas 104 Chica-go 97 (ot); Houston 115 New Jersey 104; San Antonio 97 Sacramento 80; Derwer 98 Var-colver 93; Portland 98 Mirmsotte 82; Los An-geles Lakara 108 Los Angeles Cippers 85. Billiards

Badminton

STRACHAN WORLD MATCHELAY CHAMP-IONSHIP (Liverpoot) First round: M Kothari (nd) bt E Hughes (nd) 4-1; D Cauder (Eng) bt M Rehani (ind) 4-0; P Chapman (Eng) bt A A Guerica (nd) 4-0; P Sheehan (Eng) bt C Shatt (Eng) 4-3; Bowls

Scotland won the Home International Championship at Swansea for the seventh time in eight years yesterday when they best Wales 114–100. When they best Wates TH-TOI.

HOMEINTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
(Swammari: Scotland by Wates 114-100 (Scotland): R Cortist by Probins 21-85; A Marshall

107-107 (Stochastic 21-85) (Souriey by Marshall

108-108; R McCalloch by J Price T7-85; W W

Wood by P Rowards 17-85; G Robertson lost
to R Wasis 19-21.

Boxing doe Calzaghe, of Weles, has pulled out of his World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title defence against Paraguay's Juan Carlos Gimenez in Cardiff on 21 March with a damaged wrist. The rest of bill has been switched to York Hall, Bethnal Green, and will be broatlead by North Hall, Bethnal Green, and will be headined by Mark Prince, the unbeaten International Boxing Federation and WBO Inter-Continenrederation and WBO inter-Commen-tal light-heavyweight champion. Uister's Pay Close has pulled out of his contest with the international Box-ing Organisation super-middleweight champion, Made Larsen, on 20 March in Aartus, Denmark, after injuring his back. No new date has yet been exhapted.

WORLD BOXING UNION LIGHTWEITER-WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP (Liverpool, Terredwy: S Neary (Liverpool hodier) bi A Holigen (Liverpool) as all

SHEFFIELD SHIELD (Second day of four) Melbourne: Resmarta 373 for 9 deo (D F Hills 128, 5 Young 81); Victoria 197 for 4 Brisbane; Ouernstand 197 (M L Love 62); Western Australia 405 for 8 (B P Julian 94, 5 M Katich 80). Newcastier: South Australia 352 (D Picquinald 66); New South Welse 187 for 6 (C J Richards 61).

FOOLDAIN
SCOTLAND B SQUAD (Friendly v Wales
B, Cumbermand, 24 March): Goold (Celid,
Main (St Johnstone), Cletand (Rengers, 1)
McKinsky (Celid, Ritchie (Fisuras), McInton (Stockport), Cameron (Fiseras), Crimiton (Glockport), Cameron (Fiseras), Crimiton (Fiseras), Solomaton (Cystell Plaine),
Fullen (Fiseras), Solomaton (Sunderland), McCamn (Fiseras), Solomaton (Sunderland), McCamn (Fiseras), Charden (Judget), Pressissy Dundes Utd., Rise (Sunderland), Saller (Coventry), Wright (Camarmock), McColast (Rangers), Freedman

SCOTLAND UNDER-21 SOLIAD (Friendly v Desmark Under-21, Stirling, 24 March): Alexander (Sternousemutr), Mathleson (Cusen of the South), Robertson (St. Johnstone), Scrimgeoux (St. Mirren), Carey (Bristol City), R. Anderson (Aberdeen), Horn (Herris), McCissley (St. Johnstone), McCissley, Landerson (Lundse), Strabner (Marchester Utd.), Carepbell (Lesseler), Esselon (Dundse), Utd.), B. Fergusson (Rangers), McCusloch (Utdnarviel), Surchill (Catt), Dargo (Faith), Effect (Cettic), Graham (Rangers), McCusloch (Motarviel), The Resour's Latte Ressel TS-Relian Care

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Relian Cup comi-finals second log: Lazio 2 Juventus 2 THERSEARY S. LATE RESPUTS I MEMBER LTD seam-finets second leg: Lado 2 Juventus 2 (agg. 3-2); Perme 2 Milan 2 (agg. 2-2; Millen wor or every goole rule). Datch Cup quanter-finet: PSV Eindhoven 4 Feyenourd D. French Langue Cup semi-finet: Perts St-Germein 2 Lans 1. Ryman Langue Pull Members Cup fourth round: Boreham Wood 2 Yesting 2 (after segm time, Yesting won 3-0 on paralities).

Golf
The Golf Foundation is launching a five-year £1.3m grass roots junior development programme aimed at reversing a wornying trend for the sport; an ageing golfing population.

ROYAL MOROCCAN OPEN (Apadit) Early less that did 138 M Davis 7 65; 141 R Kartson (Swe) 70 71, 144 D A Russel 75 69; 146 S Henderson 78 65; A Cabrera (Arp) 77 75; 147 A Hutter 76 71; MA Merth (So) 59 76; H Thid (Se) 77 71; 148 M Gosgin (Ave) 77 71; G Hutchen 77 70; MA Merth (So) 59 76; H Thid (Se) 77 71; Maggar 65 J Daty 6 Chic. 69 5 Pole, C Mongonoris (SB) 70 T Koles, T Walson, M Calcasecthia, V Singh (Fig. B Langer (Ge) K Sutherland, B Creasers, R Houselon L Merthers, J Kelb, B Geborgs, B Frevd, Selecthic 73 S Lie (SB), 78 J Permeyk (See), E St (SA).

TUSKER KENYAN OPEN (Natrobl) Leeding second-round scores: 134 R Gorzalez (Arg) 59 65, 135 F Lindgren (Swe) 68 67; G Sherry IND 88 67; G Sherry (GB) 58 67.

CERCLE K WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (Tuc-son, Artzone) Leading final-round scores (US unless stated): 98 M Mallor, 67 M Edd, T Ber-rott, K Wobb (Aust, S Morre (Ind.), Chorl (Swe). J Gallagher-Stritt. 88 C Wallor, K Techeting, D Cos-Lovel (Can), H Affredason (Swe). 68: 70 L Hacking, 71 S Studwick, K Mechall, H Dob-son, 25 A Michales, 25 L Device.

Paralympics

Rugby League Rugby Union SUPER-12 SERIES (Hemblon, NZ): † Hymicanes, 22 Waltoko Chiels 19.

Averaging 20.5 knots, the all-women crew of the 92-foot catamaran Royal & Sun Allance yesterday clocked 483 miles in 24 hours. This puts them less than two days behind the world record schedule, set by the Frenchman Olivier de Kersauson, 38 days into their cuest to set a new best fitne of their quest to set a new best time of less then 71 days and 20 hours. Britain's Ben Ainsile took the gold medal in the Laser class at the ISAF Process in the Look Cases at the Cour-World Championships in Dubai. ISAF WORLD CHAMPIONESHIPS (Bubai) Sin-glebanded Open: Final positions: 1 B Amale (28) 63pts; 2 M Stectburn (Aus) 94; 3 D Bry-mark (Swa) 101.

The Olympic super-G champion, Picabo Street of the United States, Picabo Street of the United States, holds her leg yesterday in a crash at the final women's World Cup downhall of the season in Crains Montania, Switzerland. Street came back less than she months ago from a Serious knee injury. The race was called off. WORLD CUP BERTS DOWNHALL (Crains Montania, Switzerland, 1975) of the world Cup Herrs DOWNHALL (Crains Montania, Switzerland (Auth in 3145) 5 K (Binding (N) 13138; 4 Harmond Auth 13145; 5 K (Binding (N) 13138; 4 Harmond Auth 13145; 5 K (Binding (N) 13138; 4 Harmond Court (Swit) 431; 5 K (Binding (N) 1318; 4 D Cartin (Swit) 431; 5 K (Binding Cup) 4 King (Swit) 4 D Cartin (Swit) 431; 5 K (Binding Cup) 4 King (Swit) 4 D Cartin (Swit) 431; 5 K (Binding Cup) 4 King (Swit) 4 D Cartin (Swit) 431; 5 K (Binding Cup) 4 King (Swit) 4 Swit (Swit) 4 P (Binding Cup) 4 King (Swit) 4 Swit (Swit) 4 King (Swit) 4 K

THAILAND MASTERS (Bangkold) Quarter-6 net: A Herrillon (Eng) bit N Bond (Eng) 5-2. Souash

REMAILT AUSTRIAN OPEN (Linz) Quarter fi-nairs: P Nooi (Sco) bit A Gough (Web) 17-15-15 5-2 8-5 65; Pubrimen (Eng) bit D-lamon (Ana) 15-10 5-11 14-15 5-7; C-Walter (Eng) bit A Barn-de (Eig) 15-11 15-10 9-15 5-15; M Calins (Eng) bit R Eylan (Aus) 15-12 11-15 15-17 15-5 15-13.

SUITIO
SPTRIG GRAND TOURNAMENT (Cealing) Soft days Assnowake (won 4, lost 2) bt Welsenosato (+2); Nyclusenho 2-9 bt Higgenouml 3-3; Coloro (+2) bt Kristonia (2-4); Alfonouml 3-3; Coloro (+2) bt Kristonia (1-4); Milliotami (+2) bt Minetolių (+2); Tameliassuga (+2) bt Kristonia (1-6); Haminosima (3-3) bt Rivao (2-4); Assnowho (+2) bt Kristonia (2-3); Asimbalia (3-4) bt Welsenoin (1-4); Minetoliu (1-3); Asimbalia (1-3); Software (3-3); Colyonia (1-3); Asimbalia (1-3); Tochinomeka (3-3) bt Kunopins (4-2) bt Belacorid (1-4); Telemonami (3-3) bt Garryot (3-3); Asimbalia (1-3); Tochinomeka (3-3); Minetolium (3-3); Minetoliu

TODAY'S NUMBER

1,000

The number of rand [£121] that Paddy Uoton, fitness trainer to the South African cricket team, was fined yesterday by his national governing body after being found guilty of misconduct but innocent of making racist comments to the crowd during the second Test against Pakistan in Durban, Upton was held to have threatened the complainant with injury.

WTA TOUR EVERT CUP (Indian Wells): Semi-final: L Devenport (US) bt S Graf (Ger) 6-4 4-6 4-2 ret.



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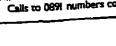


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Lombardo takes throne at Palace

laugh about at the expense of the national team jeopardised their World Cup qualification in Rome last October, but there must have been loud guffaws around the board rooms of Serie.-i clubs vesterday when Crystal Palace announced that they were placing their fate in the hands of the invisible man, Attilio Lombardo, who will act as player-coach until the end of this season, when the club hope that Terry Venables will take over.

A fleeting appearance as substitute in the 6-2 defeat at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday apart, one could be excused for thinking that the Italian had long since left the club, so little has been seen of him, due to a catalogue of injuries since his arrival But there he was large as life

at the club's ramshackle Mitcham training ground yesterday to hear Steve Coppell, who he replaces, announce to a gobsmacked gathering of English and Italian media that Palace were pinning their hopes of survival on a complete novice. And before the assembly could close their mouths, he added that Lombardo would be assisted by fellow striker Tomas Brolin, who is on a week-to-week contract at the club and has an English appearance record even more lim-

ited than Lombardo's. "I realise it is a bold, massive step," said Coppell, who returns to his role as director of of people will look upon as being foolish, but something had to be done. It might not work, the-field politics."

ITALY have not had much to An invisible Italian is the new man in charge English this scason ever since our at Selhurst Park. Clive White reports

> but at the moment everyone expects us to go down anyway - it's only the people within these walls who think we've got a fighting chance of staying up."

> It is an appointment that is probably par for the course at the moment at a club which seems intent on upstaging itself when it comes to bizarre decisions. Ron Noades, the chairman, and Mark Goldberg, the club's prospective owner, were both conspicuous by their absence (though Goldberg had been at the training ground before the press arrived, possibly practising his ball-juggling skills à la Michael Knighton) and it was left to poor Coppell to field the questions that rained in on him.

He accepted responsibility for the club's plight and the appointment of Lombardo, following consultation with Noades and Goldberg. Recent months at the club had been like "slow strangulation", he said. "In an ideal world I wouldn't be speaking to you - Palace would be in mid-table and I would be manager. But we are drifting down the league and I felt very strongly something had to be done.

"I'm very sad at the club's position and I am responsible, the buck always stops with the manager. I want as much as possible to release Attilio from that kind of pressure. I want him to confootball, "and a step that a lot centrate on what matters - the preparation of the team - and not get involved in any of the off-

Lombardo was given half an hour to think about the offer, after being summoned to a hotel

on Thursday evening by Goldberg. Having agreed, he said through an interpreter, that he felt as if, "the hotel roof was falling in on me." He was still reeling from the magnitude of his decision and hoped that he would not get home and find his wife packing to leave.

He did not envisage too many changes just yet with today's game at Villa Park followed smartly by another, on Wednesday at Newcastle, after which they have 10 days' respite. He lamented the shortage of

midfielders at the club (not helped by the recent sale of Andy Roberts) and will no doubt be relieved to hear that the club is in the process of negotiating the transfer of Sasa Curcic from Aston Villa for £1m on Monday.

The player-coach stressed that it was only a temporary appointment and that he intended to return to being "simply a player" at the end of the season. It was on Wednesday that

Lombardo's fellow countryman and friend, Gianluca Vialli, did his own player-manager career some good with that annihilation of Palace. Lombardo said that he would be ringing Vialli. "Gianluca is in a similar position, although he is driving a Formula One car, as it were, while I'm in charge of a sinking ship," he said. "His advice will help but he will not solve my problems."



Worried look Lombardo contemplates his appointment yesterday

don, is named in the Under 21

Livernool's Mark Kennedy

has been ruled out of the Re-

public of Ireland's friendly in-

ternational against the Czech

Republic in Olomouc on 25

March. The 22-year-old winger

has had an operation to correct

damaged tendons in his hand

squad for the first time.

BBC lose Gullit to ITV

ITV Sport have signed up Ruud Gullit from under the nose of the BBC for the World Cup. Gullit had been expected to be part of the Beeb's World Cup team this summer, but ITV Sport announced yesterday that favours a move back to his they had signed Gullit on a two- North-east roots. year deal to help present ITV's flagship games in the Champions' League and FA Cup as well year's FA Final on 16 May.

er and now I'll be in a very priv- as much as I am prepared to say." ileged position working with professionals I also respect, ter Smith insists that Gascoigne, such as Bob Wilson. Alex who is sidelined with a calf in-Ferguson, Kevin Keegan and Terry Venables, on ITV."

Robson makes a move for Gascoigne BRYAN ROBSON has asked Paul Gascoigne's agent, Mel tal Palace. Stein, to sound out the Rangers

and England midfielder over a possible move to Middlesbrough. The Boro manager is a longstanding admirer of Gascoigne and wants Stein to find out if he a move outside Scotland.

"I have not approached Rangers, or [the Rangers chairman] David Murray, but, as as France 98 and the 2000 Eu-there does seem to be some truth ropean Championships. Gullit that Rangers will let Gazza go, will make his ITV debut at this I have spoken to Stein," Robson said. "I have asked him to find Gullit said: "Ive enjoyed out whether Gazza would be interested. I will find out whether

jury at present, is not being

overall performance against

Swindon in midweek particu-

want revenge after their defeat

"Someone has come in so we

have looked at the offer and asked Paul: How do you feel about that?" "Smith said. "He has one or two considerations outside football to take in which mean he would not be averse to

"A lot of players are stimulated by new clubs and I think that Paul might be one of those. I think that if he was looking at himself then he may be thinking that at the end of the season fresh pastures would be the right thing for him and good Alan Hansen and Gary Linek- Rangers are interested and that's his career."

Howard Kendall fears he could be dragged into an auc-The Rangers manager Waltion over the Chilean midfielder Jose Luis Sierra. The Everton manager had hoped to pushed out of Ibrox, despite re- have the 29-year-old Sierra,

who turned in a brilliant display er Derek Whyte, is also recalled. against England at Wembley re-cently, in his squad to face Scotland in the Euro 96 cam-Blackburn at Goodison today.

However, protracted negotiations mean the move for the Colo Colo player is on hold. "It seems that people are touting the player around looking for a buyer," Kendall said.

Steve Thompson has made his first signing as Sheffield United manager with the capture of Paul Devlin from Birmingham. The 25-year-old striker will cost the Blades £200,000, plus an additional £50,000 if the and will be out of action for at club are promoted.

least three weeks. Aberdeen's Foin Jess is back in the Scotland squad after an absence of 21 months. Jess is now certain to partner Blackburn's Kevin Gallacher up front in the friendly against Denmark at Ibrox on 25 March. Jess's (Blackbur). Dornelly (Celic), Dorte (Bargera), Booth (Borussia Dortmund). club-mate, the central defend-

Doncaster lay off coaches

DONCASTER ROVERS, who are 12 points adrift at the paign. Gavin Strachan, the Coventry midfielder and son of bottom of the Third Division, the Sky Blues manager, Gorhave laid off their coaches, Dave Cowling and Paul Ward, as part of a series of cutbacks.

The manager, Mark Weaver, has told the players they are only required to turn up on matchdays because there would be nobody to coach them for the rest of the week.

Cowling and Ward had both been working with the first team. The former Stockport and Rotherham boss Danny Bergara will stay on at the clul to coach the juniors.

Rovers have also agreed settlements with players Simon Island and Darren Utley to cancel their contracts while their former skipper Ian Gore

Smith sets his mind on resurrecting Rangers

WALTER SMITH shrugged off speculation over Paul Gascoigne's future vesterday and set his sights on reviving his side's day. The Rangers manager takes his injury-hit squad to Fir Scottish Cup quarter-final re- he said. "But, as far as I am conaiming to stop Bury's revival at tem, which was pioneered in Park for the third time this sea-Italy, will also be used in the son knowing they have yet to play-off finals and the Cocacome away with a victory.

With the England midfield-

week. Smith is anxious to reaf- Call - apparently for the first firm that securing a 10th suc- time in the midfielder's career cessive Premier Division title remains his priority. Gascoigne icent about discussing Gasand Brian Laudrup will again be coigne's situation further. missing through injury, both title challenge at Motherwell to- having only an outside chance er, and by all accounts he might

play at Dundee. With the loss of the injured Sergio Porrini and Gordon is one that we really need to win Durie and the suspensions of to keep the pressure up on the er's future dominating this Richard Gough and Stuart Mo- two teams above us."

Smith is understandably ret-

"He is still a Rangers playof being fit for Wednesday's be fit in time for Wednesday." cerned, the only problem I have got is tomorrow's game. It

to the fourth official how much of the same from his side after nine goals against." Robson stoppage time will be played at said. "We have now got to get the end of each half in all Nationwide League games. He

Middlesbrough asked for more of the same

By Ian Rodgers

BRYAN ROBSON wants more larly after two bad defeats and the 6-0 win over Swindon in establish themselves as the best away side in the First Division at Portsmouth today after conceding nine goals and scoring the City Ground. Bury are unnone in their last two matches beaten in nine games but Forest on the road.

midweek. The Middlesbrough back to being the best away manager hopes his side can re- team in the First Division." The Teessiders' rivals for the title, Nottingham Forest, will be time that will be added. The sys-

"I was pleased with our at Gigg Lane in November.

Dye-soaked Gazza is strung up by the ankles

From today until the end of

the season, referees will indicate

will then hold up a board to in-

dicate the minimum amount of

Cola Cup final between Chelsea



THE GAFFER **TAPES**

chances of signing Paul Gascoigne, literally, but it was hardly my fault. For weeks now there's been a conspiracy against me. It's not just the usual stuff, our team playing poorly, opposition goalkeepers having blinders, refs only seeing penalties for the other side. After you've been in the game as long as I have you realise goes with the job.

No, this was different. I've been followed, my neighbours have had strange people asking questions about me, vile rumours have been spread. At first I thought it was the Child Support Agency, or a private dick for one of my ex-wives. I've had all that in the past but we're all on good terms at pre-

Then I noticed that every the dustmen came, someone was going through my wheelie bin. So I booby-trapped it,

was opened a bucket of purple dye would fall on the perpetrator and one of those mantraps which leave a bloke hanging from a tree by his ankle would whip into action. It was one of those times when my days in the scouts came in

Late that night there was a sudden commotion. I went out every manager thinks that. It to see a chubby figure hanging upside down, red dye dripping from his head, saying "way-ch mon, whit's ga-wan on?" It was Gazza. He'd come round to ask me to sign him.

earlier. "Only Crystal Palace really want me," he had said. "I'm desperate, I can't go there. Thomas Brolin's already snaffled the seat next to the dinner lady and he's also tuck shop monitor. The dressing-room's Wednesday, the night before not going to be big enough for both of us."

However, just before he knocked on my door he opened

I THINK I've blown our I rigged up a few wires so if it my bin to chuck in a few Mars right though. Marco rang up hostel (the lads will be home as Bar wrappers... splat.

He took it badly. "I'd rather put up with a Swede than look he said, "at last". Then he like a beetroot," he said before storming off in tears. He would have bumped into that bloke from the Premier League's bungs commission as he went, but fortunately the guy had a big pair of rubber gloves on so he was able to keep Gazza away. Funny that he happened to be in the area.

It's a shame though, I even had João Havelange's backing for my bid. Good old Jo, he can always be relied upon for pa-We'd spoken on the phone tronage, he's now told Ger-Australia and England they have his support for 2006. He's made a career out of telling The incredible thing is, it still works, just look at the beadlines this week. You could aimost hear Tone and Mandy thinking

"wow, what an operator".

this week, he was so emotional he could hardly talk. "At last", went quiet as he thought of all the tackles from behind that slashed his ankles and finished his beautiful career. "The horror, the horror," he whispered before he put the phone down. They should use a special orange card for these dismissals and name it the Van Basten in

The decision to ban reserve goalies from joining the squad until summoned is handy as well - it could be a nice little earner. I've formed the World Cup many, Brazil, South Africa, Goalie Camp Pic to accommodate keepers from places like Argentina, Brazil, South Korea and South Africa who are gopeople what they want to hear. ing to be 10-16 hours flying time from France. We're only a few hours by Channel Tunnel so they're much better off staying m Studgethorpe.

his honour.

For a small fee they can kip Fifa has got a few things at the club's youth academy

it's off-season). Bruno, down the local caff, has promised to introduce a few foreign recipes such as pasta, rice, curry, quiche and burritos though neither he nor Rover looked too happy when I told him South Koreans eat dog.

Ivor Panic will give them dai-

ly training sessions and there's a jogging path along the canal towpath. We're knocking together a brochure and in case all that doesn't work we're including a few pictures of Swet-

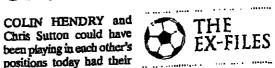
Meanwhile, Shann Prone's out again this week after he argued with me about team selection. He think's he should be in it. He claims there's a clause in his contract says he has to play but there isn't any longer, the chairman had it drawn up in invisible ink. With Ivor Niggle gone to West Ham on loan I'm down to the bare bones.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

SIDELINES

Pickering the pick of the switchers

COLIN HENDRY and positions today had their true vocations not been



week for week for week for week for a proppy with the popy with the popy

spotted. Blackburn Rovers' visit to Everton stirs memories of another player who switched roles - and clubs - with striking consequences. Fred Pickering was a mediocre full-back who Blackburn

converted into a centre-forward good enough to land an £85,000 move to Everton 34 years ago this month. There he partnered Roy Vernon, whose talents Rovers had also cashed in on. The timing of Pickering's transfer was disastrous for the Ewood Park club, who had been well placed to win the championship for the first time in 50 years. They had to wait until 1995 to finish top.

Howard Kendall, now in his fourth spell at Everton, was player-manager at both clubs. In 1981, during his first stint in the Goodison hot seat, he went back to Blackburn for his coach, Mick Heaton, goalkeeper Jim Arnold, and Glenn "Killer" Keeley, the Hendry of his day, who was sent off half an hour into his one loan appearance (a 5-0 home de-

feat by Liverpool). Keith Newton, who himself started in attack, had represented England as a Second Division right-back before Everton bought him from Blackburn. Others with a dual connection include Harry Leyland, Matt Woods, Duncan McKenzie, John Bailey, Alan Irvine and Bobby Mimms. However, it was not until Kenny Dalglish was united with Jack Walker's wallet in 1991 that Rovers reversed the drain in talent, signing Mike Newell for £1.1m.

Ten things that Arsenal's Liberian Christopher Wreh might be missing today



His home city, the war- be as interesting as Arseravaged capital, Monrovia. Like Highbury, its inhabitants would prefer to be elsewhere. 2 Gurley Street, the liveli-

est area in Monrovia for 7 A bottle of Club beer in bars and clubs. 3 A glass of home brew palm wine, often accom-

panied in Liberia by a home-grown grass spliff. Not the kind of thing that any Gunner would indulge in, of course. 4 Swimming, fishing and

watersports at Lake Piso. 5 A trip to the Firestone rubber plantation, the want to buy Wembley staworld's largest. Said to dium.

nal sides of the Eighties, but more flexible. 6 A day trip to Bangor

beach, one of several close to the Liberian capital. a chop bar (roadside cafe). 8 Pepper soup and fufu

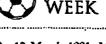
(fermented cassava). 9 Buying cheap, quality suits on Benson Street, Monrovia's Saville Row. 10 Development plans rooted in reality. President Charles Taylor wants his country to improve "step by step." Arsenal



NAME OF THE GAME No 26: THE McCAIN STADIUM

Grounds bearing the name of a sponsor – such as Bolton's Reebok Stadium or Stoke's Britannia Stadium - are a comparatively recent development, but Scarborough changed the name of their home as long ago as 1988. McCain Foods, one of the biggest employers in the town, have sponsored what was the Athletic Ground for 10 years and are expected to renew their agreement when it expires next year.

THIS



On 13 March 1991, Manchester United travelled to Southampton without a League win for two months. Trailing the First Divi-

sion's joint leaders, Arsenal and Liverpool, by 16 points. United were unable to end their lean spell, and managed only a 1-1 draw, with Paul Ince scoring for the visitors after Neil Ruddock had put the Saints ahead.

ferent form (blamed on their preoccupation with European giory) was not the only subject that week to be echoed now. Terry Venables and Paul Gascoigne, both currently being linked to Crystal Palace, were making news seven years ago as well.

United's patch of indif-

Venables' attempt to buy Tottenham put him in the headlines, while Gazza was linked to Lazio, and then moved for £8.5m.

A HISTORY LESSON As Bristol City and Bristol

Rovers prepare for their vital Second Division promotion game today, supporters of the two clubs might think back to the 1989-90 season. It was a remarkable year for the Bristol clubs, who finished first and second in the old Third Division. Their first meeting at

Ashton Gate in September finished goalless, but as the season wore on Joe Jordan's City began to set the pace.

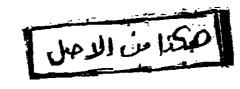
City went top in January and, apart from a brief spell in March, stayed there until the penultimate game of the season when they faced their greatest rivals. Gerry Francis's Rovers, who won 15 and drew five of their last 21 games, won 3-0 to displace City at the top of the table. Both teams won their final matches and filled the two automatic promotion places.

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

Interview de l'incisciose fees unites states d'incisciose fees unites states d'incisciose fees unites states (Cr) to Newcaste (Cr); Andy Roberts (midiscier) Crystal Patace to Winthboton (Elem); Martin Baresford (goal-desper) Burniey to Middlestrough (2400,000); Jeans Chapham (defender) Tottenham to Ipawich (2300,000); Paul Devith (Grandfeld to Hearts (275,000); Jeson van Blank (defender) Asanchester City to West Bromwich Albon (250,000); Jeson van Blank (defender) Asanchester City to West Bromwich Albon (250,000); Jeson van Blank (defender) Asanchester City to West Bromwich Albon (250,000); Jeson van Blank (defender) Jeson van Blank (

Shew Micol (defender) Sheffleld Wed-nesday to West Bromwich Albion; Paul Beesley (defender) Manchester City to West Bromwich; John Spencer (for-ward) Queen's Park Rangers to Ever-ton; Dave Barnett (defender) Dunfermane to Port Vale; Andy Walk-er (forward) Sheffleld Unit to Reith Rovers; Jan Weenhof (defender) Gro-ningen (Neth) to lpswich (trial).

Contributors: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelines, Sports Desk. The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharl, London E14 5DL e-mell address: sport @ independent.co.uk



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*Woeful week for stroppy Stoichkov

A LISTLESS Bulgarian side were beaten 2-0 in a friendly international in Buenos Aires this week - a result which was something of an embarrassment for Bulgaria's top striker, Hristo Stoichkov.

On arrival in Buenos Aires, Stoichkov had said that, without their former captain, Diego Maradona, Argentina "did not exist." The result helped to prove that his statement was somewhat fatuous - and Stoichkov was ineffective and was substituted at the interval.

Stoichkov's replacement, Emil Kostadinov, another veteran forward, fared even worse. He was sent off for elbowing the home defender, Mauricio Piñeda. The Fiorentina striker, Gabriel Batistuta, and Valencia's Claudio Lopez scored in each half for Argentina.

There was more bad news for Stoichkov yesterday. Having travelled to Argentina without the permission of his club, Barcelona, he discovered that his contract with the Catalan club had been terminated.

The 36-year-old Maradona, meanwhile, is pondering yet another comeback, this time with an Argentinian Second Division club, All Boys.

"I don't want pressure or problems of any sort, my wish is just to enjoy myself and help the club win promotion," said Maradona, who abandoned his last return with Boca Juniors back in October.

THE former national captain Rai was recalled by Brazil for the first time in nearly four years this week, while the voiatile striker Edmundo found himself

friendly away to Germany in if they stick by their decision. Stuttgart on Wednesday week. month's Gold Cup after being left in the cold for six months dropped again, apparently due to his stormy relationship with his Italian club, Fiorentina.



FOOTBALL AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALE

Rai won the last of his 47 caps in the semi-final of the 1994 World Cup against Sweden. The coach, Mario Zagallo, has now given Rai another chance, following his resurgence with the French club, Paris St-Germain. However, Zagallo said: "This does not guarantee him a place in the squad for the World Cup.

THE top Albanian club Partizan Tirana are to boycott the league championship because of repeated attacks on players and referees inside stadiums.

Partizan decided on the boycott following an attack on the referee and his assistants in a match last month in Elbasani. The match officials said they were beaten in their changing room by a small group of Eibasani supporters at balf-time.

Partizan, in second place in the league, will continue their boycott until the government and the football federation can' Rai was one of 12 foreign- be stamped out. They could be based players picked for a relegated to the Second Division

In an unrelated incident, the Edmundo, recalled for last Partizan coach Pedat Musta is in a coma in hospital after being shot and seriously wounded. for indiscipline last year, was A neighbour in Tirana has allegedly admitted to the crime for "personal reasons".



finals begin in France

Rene Simoes, the coach of Jamaica, already has six English-bor neite arrives, the coefficients, areauly has six cingustroom players in his World Cup squad ~ and he may be about to add some more. "Maybe I can go for 10 overal," he said this week, adding that the Jameican Football Federation has been immedated with requests from players with a Jameican heritage hoping to get a late ticket to the World Cup. He refused to give names, citing confidentially requested by the smalleants Manager and to get a late tocket to the world cour. The closest script confidentially requested by the applicants. However, any newcomer is bound to kick a Jamaican off the team – and Simoes wants to keep the peace. "If it breaks the chemistry, I'll send them [the newcomers] back," the coach promised.

Ajax make move for unsettled Kinkladze

Georgi Kinkladze, but nothing will be concluded this weekend, according to City's manager, Joe

The Dutch clubs have made international, who has put in a written transfer request, but no move is imminent and a transfer has not been discussed, Royle said yesterday.

Kinkladze trained with his team-mates yesterday moraing, following his recovery from an ankle injury, and will play in tomorrow's First Division relegation six-pointer at Port Vale.

Meanwhile, Royle will speak to the Sheffield Wednesday manager. Ron Atkinson, in the next few days in an attempt to extend Lee Briscoe's loan spell at the club. But the loan move of the defender David Morley to Ayr seems likely to fall through because he needs in-

ternational clearance. The Football League chairman, David Sheepshanks, has tried to allay fears that leading First Division clubs are about to form their own super league. First Division clubs have

AIAX want to sign the unsettled denied reports they are trying Manchester City playmaker, to create their own breakaway league to try to bridge the financial gap between the Premier League and Nationwide League. But those sides likely to lose out if the big clubs did an inquiry about the Georgian go it alone are still fearful of moves they believe would put their future in jeopardy.

However, Sheepshanks has invited representatives from the First Division steering committee and the newly formed Division Two and Three committee to a meeting next week to discuss the future - and is keen to make it clear that he believes that the smaller sides have nothing to fear.

He said: "Talk of breakaways and secret deals have been roundly refuted by Division One themselves and to my knowledge have no foundation whatsoever. "I've written to all chib chair-

men urging them not to overreact and to find common ground so that we can complete the positive improvements that we are now close to achieving.

"Grassroots football in this. country will benefit from a stronger and united Football



The Argentinian striker Claudio Lopez (right) finds room to shoot despite the attentions of the Bulgarian defender Ilia Gruiev in Tuesday's friendly in Buenos Aires, which Argentina won 2-0

Major fixtures and pools check TODAY 3.0 orden spread

FA Carling Premiership 1 Aston Vila v Crystal Palace 2 Barnsley v Southampton ... 3 Bolton v Sheffield Wednes 4 Everton v Blackburn ter Utd v Arsenal (115am). 5 Newcastle v Coventry 6 Tottenham v Liverpoo 7 West Ham v Chelsea

First Division 9 Bradierd City v Birminghan 10 Huddersfield v Transners : 11 Norwich v West Bromwich

Second Division

20 Bournemouth v Wo 22 Burnley v Luton 23 Carlisle v Brentford . 24 Fulham v Milwell

28 Preston v York ... 29 Wetlord v Southend 30 Wigen v Oldham 31 Wycombe v Ptymo

Third Division

37 Derlington v Torquay 38 Exeter v Huli 39 Hartlepool v Swanses Lincoln City v Rochdele Actherham y Mansfleid

Scarborough v Leyton Orient ..

Shrewsbury v Peterborough Bell's Scottish League

Premier Division 40 Dunfermine v Aberde

42 Motherweii v Rengen 43 St Johnstone v Hibernian

First Division 44 Ayr v Airdrie .. 45 Dundee v Morton. 46 Falkirk v Raith 47 Partick v St Mirren

Second Division 49 Ctyde v Inverness CT Ctydebank v Livingsto East Fife v Stransaer .

Albion Rovers v Cowdent East Stirling v Berwick Rangers Queen's Park v Dumbarton

Ross County v Montrose TOMORROW

FA Carling Premiership Darby v Leeds (40)... Nationwide Football Leagu First Division

Chariton v Sunderland (1.0)

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division Cettic v Dundee Litd (30)

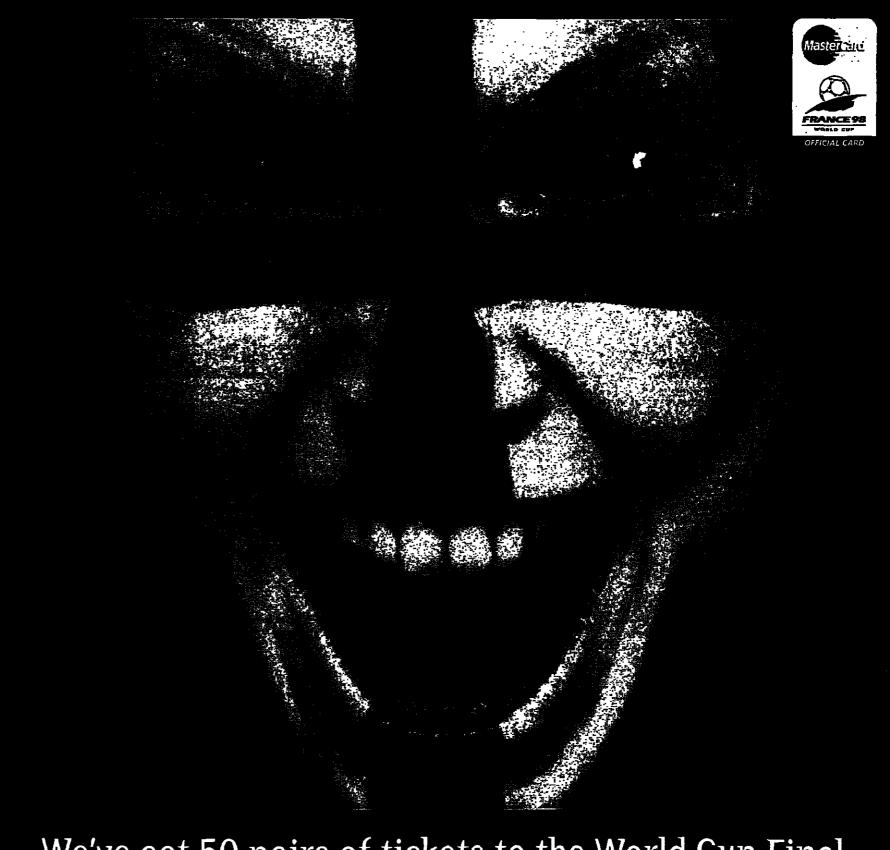
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A football philosopher à la Cantona

Emmanuel Petit used to think football the most important thing in life. Now he knows better, but as he prepared for this morning's showdown at Old Trafford it was clear he has retained his passion for the game. He spoke to Glenn Moore

SOME players wave to relatives in the crowd, some kick a ball into the net. Emmanuel Petit's pre-match ritual is different. Amid the roar of the crowd at Old Trafford this morning he will stand alone for a few moments and enter a private world. He may pause to cast a few blades of grass into the wind before softly reciting a few words. Then he will join his Arsenal team-mates and prepare to play Manchester United.

The dedication is a poignant memorial to his brother, Oliver, who died at the age of 21 while playing football almost a decade ago. Petit was then a gifted 18-year-old playing for Monaco and already on the verge of international selection. It was a shattering blow to a teenager obsessed with football and he spent years coming to terms with the sport which offered him so much but had taken away so much more.

"When I was young I loved foothall," he said when we met this week, "I really loved it. It was my whole life. When my brother died my mind changed about football. It was not so important. I had wanted to be a professional footballer for me, now I am a footballer for him." At the time he considered giving up but felt that would not be what his brother would have wished. Now he said he feels his brother, who died from a blood clot on the brain, is watching him when he plays and he draws faith from that belief.

The trauma was made worse for Petit by his living in Monaco while his family were the length of France away in Dieppe. Then, a year later, his father suffered a heart attack while training with his football team. He was rushed to hospital and survived but Petit recalled "for it to again be on a football pitch, it was unbelievable". Petit, himself, underwent many tests to check his health.

We are sitting in the St Albans hotel Arsenal use as a training base and where Petit himself lived for two months before setting up home near Barnet. In the flesh the Arsenal midfielder appears smaller, younger and much friendlier than the unsmiling and-intimidating figure he cuts on the pitch. The ponytail is

down and his hair hangs loose. Although an interpreter is with us. Petit uses him just to check the occasional word or phrase. He even does crosswords in English, his desire to absorb the language hastened by his initial sense of isolation after his £3.5m move and Arsène Wenger's habit of

speaking English in training. Wenger was Petit's coach at Monaco and his presence at Highbury obviously encouraged Petit to



Thinking footballer's mentor: I was very impressed by what he did,' Emmanuel Petit says of his compatriot Eric Cantona. When I was in the French team we would always sit together, Laurent Blanc, Eric and me. Laurent would say to Eric: "There is your spiritual son" Photograph: Peter Jay

contenders with Petit memorably ar to get from White Hart Lane to Highbury during negotiations.

this summer. Tottenham were also the morning?" - he likes it here. "I needed a change after 14 years at borrowing a taxi fare from Alan Sug- Monaco. I wanted to know another country. I always liked the English approach to the game - it is still a Apart from the weather and the game, not like Italy and France

football there so frustrating.

"In England you can win or lose seven big teams and it is very hard even if we lose to Manchester Unit- outplay them. But Manchester Unit- a Channel port he had only been to morning is likely to be no different.

Rangers, Valencia and Internazionale kick-off times - "what next? Five in where there is so much pressure. The ed it will not be all over, United can ed should be good opponents bestill lose games to anyone.

> "Sometimes I would like to play anywhere. In France there are about more football here, some teams just want to kick it, they don't want to play

cause they always want to play. This is new and good for English football and for the England team."

Petit has never been to Old Trafto beat them away from home. So football against us because we would ford before - despite growing up in

England once as a schoolboy - but he is a friend of the local hero. His knowing smile confirms that I am not the first English journalist to ask about Eric Cantona but he is still happy to record his admiration.

'I was very impressed by what he did [in retiring and other matters]. It is rare to meet a player who does exactly what he wants to do, on and off the pitch. He is always thinking. Maybe he is crazy but he knows what he does when he says, 'I f ** you,' or when he takes his shirt off [as when he flung his Marseilles shirt to the ground when sent off in a charity match]. Some players, they go to Japan or America for the money, he

say, 'I stop' - and he does.
"When I was in the French team as a young player we would always sit together, Laurent Blanc, Eric and me. Laurent would say to Eric, 'There is your spiritual son'. He did influence me in small ways but no one can be just like him."

Petit, too, is a man of principle. He caused outrage in France when, while still going through the turmoil of Oliver's death he accused Marseilles of being corrupt - an accusation later confirmed. He appears, again, to have fallen out of favour with Aimé Jacquet, the French manager, though he was reticent about discussing their relationship and still hopes for a recall in time for the World Cup. However, his belief that the French team should "put on a show, a spectacle, a celebration of football and life with mistakes and goals, as in the 3-3 draw with Norway, rather than boring football like chess", is unlikely to meet Jacquet's approval.

He feels his best opportunity of getting in the French team is as a leftsided defensive player and his best position is central defence. Wenger, however, prefers him in midfield. When he plays there he links in well with the defence, he understands their needs," Wenger said. "He may appear similar to Patrick Vieira but he is more of an interceptor, Vieira is a tackler. Petit finds forwards with long passes whereas Vieira runs with the ball more." Petit has yet to score in 32 matches but Wenger added: "He has improved a lot offensively and we will get goals from him."

Today's match is the sort of occasion Petit came to England for. "At Monaco," he said, recalling the paltry crowds, "you had to motivate yourself. You had to be strong mentally." He went there at 14 in the belief that he needed to be away from his family to make it as a professional player. "It was strange, going from the poor north to Monaco with all the yachts. You might get recognized but you were only a footballer, not a golfer or tennis player," he added with a rude and dismissive gesture. "Football was regarded as the poor man's game."

Petit is a complex figure, secular but with an interest in Buddhism and, like Cantona, confident but introspective. Unusually for a footballer he asked: "What do people think of me?" and he said: "I am still discovering who I am, for a person it is the most important thing to discover about themselves."

In these moments, and when he talks of his first months here, there is a vulnerability which may stem from having to grow up too fast as a teenager. Few opponents, or referees, see this on the pitch however and this

In pursuit of a long-lasting board game

CONSIDERING that the Table Soccer in which you had seemingly endless list of mer- to twist knobs at the side of the chandise spawned by the vast industry we used to know as football now includes every- green indented surface (not thing from duvet covers to doormats and dairy products Monaco). (vou can even buy Norwich City milk now, for beaven's sake), it is surprising that we have yet to see a game that has

stood the test of time. The exception, of course, is Subbuteo which, like Jimmy Hill, seems to have been around for ever, whether you like it or not. Subbuteo actually made its debut as far back as 1947 when it was on an old Army blanket using a piece of chalk. In those days the Fifa directives were simpler - the rules addressed nothing more than the assembly of the paper nets and wire-framed goals but Subbuteo has managed to keep abreast of the changes in the game; "Continental style" keepers appeared in 1969, while Subbuteo's first all-seater successful). stadium was included in the 1976 World Cup edition, 14 years ahead of the real thing.

Over the years there have been endless variations on none have been a patch on the original. There was Striker, which involved pressing a player's head down to make him kick, and Bobby Charlton's are can't beat the real thing.

goalmouth to spin little plastic players around on a hard dissimilar to the pitch in

There was also the quaintly simplistic blow football (you never knew you could have so much fun with a straw and ping-pong ball) and the classic table football, once beloved of youth clubs and pubs, but like Chris Waddle you see them only rarely these days (although in certain parts of Italy they apparently recreate a human version of the game using people hanging on to bars).

There have been endless football card games, too, and more recently a board game called The Manager which its creator, Terry Venables, who has enjoyed a long shelf life without being particularly

Of course, part of the problem with football games is that it's almost impossible to do justice to real action; it's far more fulfilling to throw down a cou-Subbuteo's theme, but frankly, ple of jumpers in the back garden and have a kickabout yourself. PC versions have had a pretty good stab at it, but even they, addictive though they



ON THE NOT SO TRIVIAL SEARCH FOR A TABLE-TOP WINNER

However, like any current football spin-off they've still was successful, but had a been a huge commercial sucrather short shelf life (unlike cess, and if projected sales figures are anything to go by, it looks as if much the same will soon apply to the World Cup edition of Trivial Pursuit, the latest offspring of the original

version of the board game. Vinnie Jones, for one, reckons "it's a classy product". Wimbledon's captain was present at the launch along with George Best, although Melinda Messenger, scheduled for top billing, evidently had far less trivial things to do with her time than turn up at Lof- did once go and watch Hali- it's only a game.

tus Road. Instead we were fax Town. Brian Highley treated to the Beverley Sisters claims he's tried to "make the (one of whom is the widow of Billy Wright of Wolves and England fame), who admitted that what they knew about football could be written on the weighty and the rather bathe back of a postage stamp. No wonder they were all clutching copies of the game.

Not that this version of Trivial Pursuit calls for an extensive football knowledge; this is no board game Question of Sport, not with questions like: What was the name What colour are Roberto Baggio's eyes? (green); Which player did Vinnie Jones claim he'd beat by tying his dreadlocks to the corner flag? (Rund Guilit).

Jones, in fact, is featured in at least six of the questions. which fall into six categories: the world of football, players and personalities, history of the game, road to the Cop, off the pitch and free-kick. He admits that the game is a favourite of the Wimbledon players on away trips, and that "Chris Perry always wins, although Joe [Kinnear] gets all

the old questions right". Strangely, the man who spent 12 months devising the terest in football, although he football, at the end of the day

game lively and appealing to everyone, not just hardcore football fans", and it certainly treads a nice line between

The PR blurb, in fact, describes it as "the ultimate non-anorak football product which will provide a timely and entertaining foil to the serious business of France 98 and unite lovers and loathers of the game in happy conof Bobby Moore's cat? (Pele); templation of the idiosyncrasies of the national sport. Thankfully, the questions are not so wordy and, since they do not all focus on the World Cup, the game won't become obsolete as soon as the final whistle blows in the Stade de France on 12 July. Consequently it could well enjoy a longevity in the marketplace of Peter Shilton-like propor-

Its nearest competitor is bound to be the World Cup version of Monopoly, in which Brazil are Mavfair, while poor old Scotland have drawn the short straw and are the Old Kent Road, which was always downmarket, cheap and distinctly undesirquestions has absolutely no in- able. Still, as they say in real

We're (not) all going to Wembley

to Wem-ber-lee!"

Five years ago the Arsenal fans were singing this song every week. Led by the seemingly infallible George Graham, the Gunners were closing in on two Wembley finals and an imprecedented domestic cup double. They damn well did it too.

Arsenal played four times at Wembley in the 1992-3 season, beating Spurs in the FA Cup semi-final and Sheffield Wednesday in both the FA. and Coca-Cola Cup finals, the former in a replay. For a lad who had stared disbelievingly at the telly as the Gunners pulled off a miraculous 3-2 win over Manchester United in the FA Cup final of 1979, being present at Wembley to see the Gunners lift the trophy in '93 was a dream fulfilled.

Now comes the Wembley nightmare: Arsenal Football Club plan to leave Highbury and make Wembley their new home. Unthinkable? To the fans, perhaps, but not, apparently, to the club's directors, who are attempting to buy the national stadium.

Arsenal's need for a stadium with a minimum capacity of 50,000 has been well documented, but until this week the majority of supporters be-

Georgie's army. We're all going eventually resolve its diffier- old North Bank terrace, imences with Islington Borough Council and find a way to redevelop Highbury.

On Thursday, Arsenal confirmed that a bid for Wembley Stadium had been made. It is the worst news that Arsenal fans have heard since George Graham was sacked in February 1995.

The club insist that they wish to remain at Highbury. Fans are left wondering why plans to rebuild Highbury

FAN'S EYE

VIEW NO 245 HIGHBURY PAUL

ELLIOTT have been blocked, and whether relocating to Wembley is really the best option open to the club.

Highbury has been Arsenal's home since 1913. There is so much history about the place; the elegant East and West Stands, both listed buildings; the famous marble halls; Arsenal's most devoted fans. the bust of the great Herbert Chapman. This grand old stadium is a big part of what

makes Arsenal a great club Football fans love tradition. Many Arsenal fans are Home Of Football.

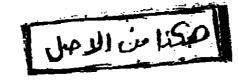
pressive as the new North Bank Stand is. To leave Highbury altogether would break many fans' hearts.

Wembley is the most famous football stadium in Britain, but would it ever feel like Arsenal's home, or would Arsenal fans feel the same disillusionment as the Wimbledon fans forced to watch their team's "home" fixtures as tenants at Seihurst Park?

The atmosphere at a Wembley cup final is something to savour, and it is conceivable that Arsenal could fill the stadium for Premiership games against the likes of Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea. However, for a midweek game against Southampton, Wembley would be half full at best and, as certain England friendlies have proven, a half-empty Wembley is a soulless place.

Arsenal fans want their dub to compete with Europe's best. But leaving Highbury for Wembley will not only leave Islington poorer both culturally and economically; it will also test the loyalty of the

Ultimately, it is not the ospect of a move to Wembley that fills the supporters with dread. It is losing Highbury, a place that Arsenal fans call The





Carrett In Gindon

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(a,b)123

Ward teaches Barnsley the one-nil knack

THERE appeared to be one sis as opposed to the long gaps certainty in the fickle game of of the FA Cup. They were chance that is the Premiership: billed as such when the season clubs will rise or fall but Barnsley were beyond redemption. They would go back to the First have added charm and hope Division as surely as Paul Gascoigne would make headlines.

So much for the consensus. Barnsley might still go down, but they are far from the hap- from the safety positions with less coconuts being shied at by a game in hand everyone else. If they beat Southampton at home today hanging on to one-goal leads." they could even move out of the Ashley Ward, a £1.5m transfer relegation places to the extreme embarrassment of the socalled "big" clubs of Tottenham never going to bury teams, it Hotspur and Everton. It is a price the nation could bear.

Barosley have become the going out on a twice weekly ba- with four goals in 1-0 victories

began and wins over Liverpool and Manchester United since and to the saga. They are undefeated at Oakwell since November and are now third from bottom, two points away

"We've achieved a knack of from Derby this season, said. "That's been the secret. We're was always a case of trying to nick games 1-0 or 2-1.*

Ward has been true to that country's darlings, giant killers strategy, securing 12 points

The Premierships so-called fall guys have developed a strategy for survival, says Guy Hodgson, while Nick Harris (below) analyses the weekend match by match

and he believes Barnsley have can stay up. That's been there what was the flintiest of de- Ferdinand two weeks away from a psychological advantage over for a while." -others in the intensive scare have to battle to survive, while

it's a bit of a shock.

goals against column and think Rovers. we've been leaking them all season, but it's a while since we got a battering. We're a lot

ward. "We're at the stage that assumption most of the Hodgson, concedes. "I don't nursed back, it is logical that the where teams feel the nerves season, but their dash for com- think we're defending badly and that could work in our fort at the turn of the year has corporately, but individuals favour," he said. "Some teams been arrested by a run of four are making isolated mistakes," are only just realising they draws and two defeats in their he said. "Every team suffers last six matches. They have not we've been ready for that see- been helped by the suspension get out of it quickly." nario since August. To others of their attacking outlet, Duncan Ferguson, who completes "People will look at our his ban today against Blackburn

Not that the visitors to Goodison are exactly brimming with confidence after tighter at the back now and shipping 13 goals in their last there's a genuine belief that we four Premiership matches. For thing in his contract. With Les reconcile the team who are second-placed Arsenal.

fences, this has come as a recovering from a knee injury Everton have been making shock as their manager, Roy and Chris Armstrong still being slumps, but it's important we

> Which is something that will have crossed the minds of the Tottenham players, if they can spare the time from squabbling with the management. Jürgen Klinsmann, the rebel with a

German will be wondering whether David Ginola is in the

right position from a place on

the field rather than the bench.

Anxiety has stalked Spurs all season. "I wake up every morning and go training," Ramon Vega, their central defender, said, "just thinking about relegation. It's the biggest thing in my life now."

Liverpool, meanwhile, have clause, will play against Liver- an obsessive need to find their 'pool, but not because of any-true personality. It is hard to

challenging for a Champions' League place with the one who have lost to Aston Villa, Southampton and Middlesbrough in recent weeks. However, Roy Evans players' give the impression they can beat Juventus one week and lose to Doncaster the next. White Hart Lane will hope it is one their bad days.

Liverpool and Blackburn will have a keen interest in what happens at Old Trafford, but then so will Cheisea who travel to West Ham with second place in their sights even if Manchester United's coat-tails are too far in the distance. Wednesday's 6-2 win against Crystal Palace elevated them to fourth, only three points behind

They have three routes to qualify for Europe, which is two more than Derby and Leeds who are on the fringes of the Uefa Cup places and will have a better idea who will finish higher after they meet at Pride Park.

They are sixth and seventh respectively with the same number of points and there was the same hair's breadth between when they met at Elland Road earlier in the season. Then Leeds were 3-0 down after 20 minutes before staging the comeback of the season to

Given the way Leeds played against Blackburn on Wednesday - awful to awesome with half-time as the junction - a similar result is conceivable.



Aston Villa v C Palace

Aston Villa manager John Gregory has problems in attack, and will give a fitness test to Stan Collymore before today's game. The England international has been struggling with foot and groin injuries that have kept him out of Villa's last two games against Chelsea and Barnsley, but he could be available to face Palace. Savo Milosevic is still under treatment for medial knee ligament damage, but he may well return against Atletico Madrid in the Uefa Cup on Tuesday, if not today. Dwight Yorke is suspended after reaching five bookings. Crystal Palace's new player-coach Attilio Lombardo is likely to start the game on the bench. His chances of a successful debut in charge have been bolstered by the return of striker Neil Shipperley to the squad after a long term injury. Centre-back Hermann Hreidarsson is suspended, while Simon Rodger is likely to have recovered from flu in time to play. Palace, seven points adrift of a Premiership safety will be hoping to recover from the 6-2 midweek defeat at Chelsea. They last won at Villa Park in 1991, and their only other win their was on their first visit in 1967. Both those games finished 1-0.



Barnsley v Southampton

Barnsley left wing-back Darren Barnard could be fit today, three days after it was thought he may have broken his leg. Barnard only sustained a calfinjury in the 1-0 win at Aston Villa, and manager Danny Wilson says his defender now has "a good chance of making it". Although midfielder Jovo Bosancic returns from a two-match ban, Wilson is without injured quartet John Hendrie (ankle), Ales Krizan (knee), Arjan de Zeeuw (groin) and Peter Markstedt (neck). Barnsley have won three of their last four Premiership games and could move out of the relegation zone with a win today.

Southampton will be without Carlton Palmer because of a one-match ban. Palmer, who has been very influential for the Saints since his £I'm move from Leeds earlier in the season, picked up the suspen-💸 sion against his former club two weeks ago. Kevin Richardson is likely to replace Palmer but leading scorer Kevin Davies and saidfielder wid Hughes will be out for the next month with long-term ankle and rib injuries respectively. The Saints have won four of their last five Premiership games, including away at Elland Road and Anfield.



Bolton v Sheffield Wed

Bolton midfielder Jamie Pollock is suffering from flu and will not be available for selection today. The news follows a week of alleged unrest between the player and the manager Colin Todd which resulted in Pollock asking for a transfer. Todd also has selection problems over Scott Sellars (leg), who sat out last week's 2-1 defeat at Liverpool with the injury, which came on the back of a two-match ban. Mark Fish is likely to get his first start since mid-january. Fish missed the whole of February on international duty with South Africa and was kept on the bench last weekend. Bolton last won on I December. Goce Sectoski is included in the Sheffield Wednesday squad today. for the first time since his £1.75m move from Hajduk Split. The Macedonian international defender received clearance to play this week. Petter Rudi (hamstring) and Mark Pembridge (stomach) have both shrugged off minor knocks but midfielder Graham Hyde is suspended. Following last week's 2-0 win over Manchester United, Wednesday manager Ron Atkinson believes his side need nine points from their nine remaining garnes to guarantee Premiership safety.



Everton v Blackburn

John Spencer, the Scottish striker signed on loan from Queen's Park Rangers this week, will make his Everton debut today. Fellow Scot Duncan Ferguson will miss the match, serving the last game of his three-match ban, while Gareth Farrelly is also suspended. Defender Craig Short and midfielder Gavin McCann are available again after injury. Everton have not won in their last five Premiership matches and go into today's game just two points above the relegation zone. having played one more game than the bottom three.

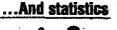
England goalkeeper Tim Flowers is likely to return for Blackburn after a shoulder strain. Flowers has missed three matches but safely negotiated a fitness check and will replace Alan Fettis. There is a doubt over England winger Jason Wilcox, who suffered a stomach strain during the 4-0 defeat at Leeds on Wednesday, but he still has a chance of being fit to start. Blackburn could also recall Billy McKinlay and have midfielder Lars Bohinen and defender Tore Pedersen available. French full-back Patrick Valery is out with a virus, while forward Kevin Gallacher serves the final game of a three-match ban.



Manchester Utd v Arsenal

Leading scorer

Alex Ferguson has injury problems for this morning's match. England midfielder Nicky Butt is almost certain to be missing with a calf strain and with Gary Pallister and Ryan Giggs still on the injured list, Ferguson won't name his side until the last minute. Phil Neville should be fit after missing the midweek I-I draw against West Ham with a slight hamstring injury and Ronny Johnsen, also missing on dednesday after suffering from concussion during the 2-0 defeat Sheffield Wednesday last week, should be added to the squad. enal's goalkeeper Alex Manninger (thigh and knee) and full-back el Winterburn (foot) have both been passed fit. Arsène Wenger one main selection decision to make, between 18-year-old Nico-Phelia and fellow striker Christopher Wreh. Wreh scored the Adgal in the 1-0 midweek win over Wimbledon, which put Arbe points behind today's opponents with three games in hand. aman, Ian Wright and Steve Bould are all nearly fit again. not in today's squad of 18, but all three should be availesday's FA Cup quarter-final replay against West Ham.



Sunderland inspire North-east boom

The North-east has always been one of English football's strongholds and the region's leading three clubs are enjoying bigger attendances this season than for many years. are attracting almost twice as many fans as they did six years ago, when all three clubs were in the old Second Division. Their aggregate average attendance

> compared with just over 52,000 in the 1991-92 campaign. The big difference this season compared with a year ago is at Division gate at their naw Stadium of Light is nearly 33,000, compared with a Premiership average at Roker Park a year ago of less than 21,000. Average crowds at

have remained at the same level

While Sunderland and Middlesbrough are both in the First Division and Newcastle lie only 14th in the Premiership, all three teams figure in the top 10 average endances this season.

for the last three years as both clubs have regularly filled

Manchester United (55,151) are the only club with an average above 50,000, while Liverpool (40,006) have the only other average gate above 40,000. Apart from Sunderland and Middlesbrough, two other Nationwide League clubs, Manchester City and Wolves, figure in the

Sunderland's average looks likely to improve in the closing weeks of the season as they continue their promotion push. Two home games have already attracted 40,000-plus gates and this week more than 37,000 saw the 1-1 draw against Birmingham.

However, business is not booming everywhere in the North-east. The area's two other League clubs, Darlington and Hartiepool, have played 18 and 19 home matches respectively this season and their aggregate attendances are just 43,275 and 41,544.

Average gates of the North-east's big three

Season		Sandedan	d Middlesbro	egh Tetal
1991-92	21,148	18,390	14,709	52,247
			16,724	63,600
1993-94	33,679	16,934	10,400	61,013
	7			18.84
1995-96	36,507	17,482	29,283	83,272
				47.79 "
1997-98*	36,679	32,782	29,966	99,427

England's 20 best supported clubs

OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION OF SOME OFFICE			
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Manchester United	55,151	Derby	28,802
		State Comment	y 28.346
Arsenal 655	38,029	Manchester City	27,714
	\$679.	Total Car	27,325
Aston Villa	35,712	West Ham	24,383
	35.038	Blackberr	24,480
Leeds	33,897	Bolton	24,107
Chelson	33 452	Worker	23,510
Sunderland	32,782	Crystal Palace	22,500
Middlestirough	29.966	a a sta	20,457
		\$	talistics: Brian Sears

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

Allan Johnston celebrates a Sunderland goal against Huddersfield. The

Wearside club are also celebrating an Improvement of more then 50

per cent in their gates this season

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Newcastle v Coventry

Steve Watson is Newcastle's only injury worry for today. Greek international defender Nikos Dabizas is in line to at least be on the bench, while Alessandro Pistone could be given a recall, after missing the last two matches through suspension. Having beaten Barnsley 3-1 in last weekend's FA Cup quarter-final, Newcastle are in line to meet today's opponents in the semi-final if Coventry overcome Sheffield United in their replay. The Magpies have won only one of their last five Premiership games, and start the day six points clear of the relegation zone with a game in hand.

Coventry defender Paul Williams stands by for his first senior football since a hemia operation two months ago and is expected to be on the substitutes' bench. Marcus Hall is likely to recover from a calf strain, while veteran goalkeeper Steve Ogrizovic plays his 496th League game for the club as City try to extend their run to 10 matches unbeaten, John Salako is out with an injured back, while long-term absentees Liam Daish and Gary McAllister have both had knee surgery this week.



Tottenham v Liverpool

Last season: 0-2 New signing Moussa Saib has joined Tottenham's infamous injury list already and will not play today. Manager Christian Gross intended to give the £2.3m Algerian midfielder his first Spurs start after two brief substitute appearances but he injured his back in a midweek reserves match. Chris Armstrong returns to partner Jürgen Klinsmann in attack. Goalkeeper lan Walker and defender John Scales. who have both been out long term, are nearly fit but will not play today. Les Ferdinand is still more than a week away from full re-

Phil Babb stands by to make his Liverpool comeback at White Hart Lane after missing five games with a knee injury. The Republic of Ireland defender has been badly missed in the Antield side's defence, and the club have won and one game, last week's 2-1 win over Bolton, in his absence. German striker Kartheinz Riedle will not play due to a thigh injury, while Mark Kennedy - back from a loan spe at QPR ~ has not recovered from a firiger operation earlier in the



West Ham v Chelsea

covery after a knee ligament injury.

West Ham captain Steve Lomas will miss today's derby with Chelsea with a thigh problem. The Northern Ireland midfielder joins defender David Unsworth, striker Paul Kitson, right-back Tim Breacker and goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko on the Hammers' casualty list, Midfielder John Monour and striker John Hartson are suspended, so Ian Bishop is favoured to come into the midfield. West Ham have drawn their last five games. They have one of the best home records in the Premiership, having lost just once this season in the League. Chelsea's player-manager Gianluca Vialli is likely to rest himself for the trip across London. The Italian scored twice in Wednesday's 6-2 win over Crystal Palace, a feat matched by Tore Andre Flo when he came off the bench, and the Norwegian is likely to be rewarded with a start at Upton Park. Roberto Di Mattieo, rested on Wednesday, replaces the suspended Dennis Wise, while Michael Duberry is ready to return, possibly in place of Steve Clarke. Danny Granville continues to deputise for Graeme Le Saux and Dmitri Kharin will



play in goal.

Wimbledon v Leicester

Leading scorer



Wimbledon's captain Vinnie Jones is doubtful for today after picking up a leg injury in the 1-0 defeat against Arsenal in midweek; England Under-21 defender Ben Thatcher pulled a hamstring in the same game and, like Jones, will have a late fitness test. Midfielder Cen Hughes, who has had hamstring trouble for some time, and vice-captain Robbie Earle could both return after long absences through injury. The Dons may play with three strikers, with Jason Euell, Carl Leaburn. and Marcus Gayle the most likely combination to start up front. Wimbledon are just four points above the relegation zone but have games in hand on all the sides below them.

Leicester manager Martin O'Neill has recalled on-loan Steve Claridge from Portsmouth and Julian Watts from Huddersfield to ease his selection problems, The Foxes are without Matt Elliott and Muzzy izzet, both starting suspensions, while Ian Marshall's planned comeback may be delayed. O'Neill is also waiting on the fitness of Tony Cottee, Garry Parker, Spencer Prior and Pontus Kamark, Leicester have won only once away against Wimbledon, last March, 3-1.

Derby County v Leeds



Jim Smith is most likely to name an unchanged side for tomorrow's home game against Leeds. Derby gave one of their best performances of the season when they beat Sheffield Wednesday 3-0 two weeks ago to stay on course for a top-six finish and will hope to maintain that form today. Striker Dean Sturridge, who missed that game following a car crash, starts a two-match ban so Jamaican international Deon Burton will again partner Paulo Wanchope in attack. Both sides will be especially keen for a win today to maintain their European hopes and take a three-point advantage over the other side.

Leeds' George Graham is likely to name an unchanged side for the first time since the end of November for the game. Not since successive wins over West Harn and Barnsley on November 22 and 29 has Graham had the luxury of being able to keep faith with a settled team. However, with striker Rod Wallace and midfielder Bruno Ribeiro both completing two-match bans, Graham seems certain to pick the same side which beat Blackburn 4-0 on Wednesday,



Saturday 14 March 1998

Fifth Test: Thorpe joins Middlesex batsman as England centurion as defiant sixth-wicket partnership keeps toiling West Indies at bay

Ramprakash's joy at first Test century

Cricket By Derek Pringle

ın Bridgetown

England 376-6

IT IS NOT often that a major innings serves both England's kong and short-term hopes, but Mark Ramprakash's maiden Test century here yesterday would have come closer than most to achieving it. Walking to the crease when his team were 53 for 4, Ramprakash, aided by Graham Thorpe's hundred at the other end, saw England into competitive territory, breaking the highest-ever sixth wicket partnership for England against the West Indies set on this

ground in 1974. For onlookers, this was Test cricket from the golden eras when hatsmen reigned supreme on featherbed pitches and scores over 400 were the only currency worth dealing in. In the process England's chances of levelling the series were transformed from hopeless to Ramprakash at 28, predates

West Indies won toss

(83 min, 52 belle, 1 four) N Hussain C Lare b McLean (22 min, 17 bells, 1 four)

Bridgetown scoreboard

sonal epiphany coming at gates. 11.40am, when after slow McLean for a glorious four through extra cover off the back foot. The scorers indicated it had taken him a mind sapping 379 minutes. In truth it had taken him 38 innings and innumerable sleepless nights to finally turn his boyhood dreams

with reality.

The blooding of Ramprakash has been a long and tortuous journey, and many less passionate men would have long thrown in the towel. Interestingly, anthropologists might observe that it is a route that appears to be favoured exclusively by Middlesex captains, and Ramprakash's predecessor, Mike Gatting, who ended with a decent enough Test record, took 58 innings to reach the same milestone.

Mind you, Gatting's fellow selector Graham Gooch only became a truly world-class player after his 36th birthday, an age by some eight years, and many

For Ramprakash, though, will be hoping that his knock it was joy unconfined, the per- here will now open the flood-

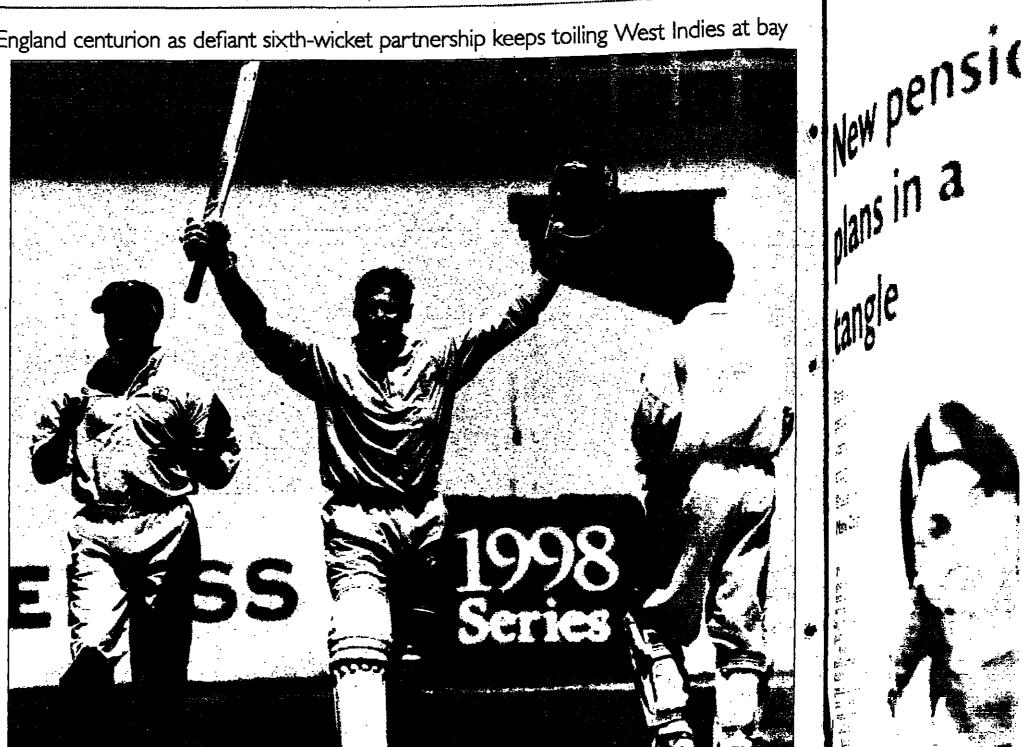
In many ways, Ramprakash progress, he struck Nixon was perhaps fortunate that John Crawley had played in Trinidad. But although the pitch in Georgetown, where he scored a brilliant 63, was poor, the ones in Port of Spain were confidence sapping greentops that have caused bad habits to creep in to the games of both Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain.

However, what is most surprising about the last three innings the Middlesex captain has played, is the presence he appears to command at the crease. It is a bearing that only the really great batsmen tend to have and one that totally belies his modest record, almost as if, like Rip van Winkle, he had been away for some time only to return fully matured.

But while some claim to be able to put their finger on the reasons for the transformation others close to him still reckon it is the same old, highly strung Ramps, the intensity better focused not by any newly-found maturity, but by the constant kicks in the teeth experienced at Test level.

Whatever the reasons, Ramprakash was determined to enjoy his long-awaited success. He has spent a long time peering down the dark, narrow lanes. Now was the time for the helicopter view and raising his arms aloft to the cacophony, he drank in the tumultuous applause, pausing only to shake hands with Brian Lara, the opposing captain, and to accept a hug from Thorpe.

events at the other end, the prepartnered Hussain during the boundaries in the morning ses-



ry against Australia at Edgbaston last June.

tempestuous team-mates past Poor Thorpe. It is the second significant milestones. But if the centuries in the bag, both in- and more recently by the spicy time in a year that his own cen- role implies something of the creased their run-scoring rate as pitches, made them little more tury has been swallowed up by second fiddle about it, the left- the bowlers, particularly the than honest trundlers. hander was anything but as quicker ones, became tired and vious occasion being when he Ramprakash, hitting just three

disconsolate.

Unable to resort to the them, it was left to Carl Hoop- he edged the off-spinner to slip.

latter's brilliant double centu- sion, took time weighing up the roughhouse tactics of their er to wheel away form one end Having batted so well, especialbest route to the peak. His youth, Curtly Ambrose and and wait for the mistakes. journey, although painstaking, Courtney Walsh had to resort Hooper is an underrated bowler A player of few frills, Thor- was not without its nervous to line and length instead. But and his slow drip tactics almost pe clearly has a growing repu- moments, as one wild slash while they are still fine bowlers, paid immediate dividends when tation for shepherding overgully off McLean testified the lack of constant menace pre Ramprakash skied a big hit After lunch, and with both viously afforded them by youth, just out Roland Holder's reach

at mid-wicket.

With a long hot day in the ficult for the West Indies to swal- men and his angled bat guided field slowly unreeling in front of low, Thorpe made it easier when the ball into Lara's hands.

ly after suffering back spasms the previous day, it was the kind of nothing dismissal Thorpe seems to specialise in against spin.

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OL.

For someone who can look as solid as Gibraltar against the quick bowlers, Thorpe has a But if the disappointment of habit of getting out to unthreata near chance was proving dif- ening deliveries from the slow

TODAY 11 PAGES OF SPORT BEGIN ON PAGE 14

5-536 (Thorpe).
To bart A. R. Caddick, A.R.C. Fraser, P.C.R. Tufnet.
Progress: First day: 50: 84 min. 20 overs. Lunch: 55-4 (Thorpe 5, Ramprakash 2) 28 overs. Thorpe refred hart at bunch with back appears and returned at the fall of the fifth wickst. 100: 187 min. 413 overs. Test: 189-5 (Remprakash 45, Thorpe 10) 56 overs. 150: 248 min. 573 overs. 200: 330 min. 762 overs. New ball taken after 81 overs at 212-5.

Aver milit of 3 over 2006 2007 on the frac overs new bas brown any 15 overs at 222-5.
WEST INDNES: C B Lambert, P A Welfaca, *B C Larn, S Chanderpaul, C L, Hooper, R I C Hotier, †D Williams, I R Bishop, C E L Ambrose, N A M McLean, G A Welsh.
Umpires: C J Mitchley (SA) and E Nicholis (WI).



ON MONDAY: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING PETR KORDA TALKS TO JOHN ROBERTS

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3558. Saturday 14 March Last Saturday's solution

Friday's solution

T N E E CHEATS CURARE

No source of fresh bit of pluck in his time?

quires Tory to accept de- 4 feat (7) 12 People's event (4) 13 Smart footwork by the Brazilians (5) 14 Section of choir tried backing small group (4) 17 Full power nearly re-

stored (7) 18 Dignity shown by model RA seduced (7)
19 Tablet – take one when you have a turn outside

(7) army (5)

22 Reference book omitting 16 Skill required to climb on a line in the speech (7) top of church? Not very a line in the speech (7) Penetrated by Odysseus' first attempt? It was (4) 25 National Westminster security guards (5) Record is held by plain-

clothes policeman (4) Little change for Lisbon business filing short final 23 Copy one article found in middle of Germany (7) VAT return (7) Artack on music piracy? Cosis of getting ready to 28 It's in the Square, actually

DOWN 2 Old craft for centuries associated with source of visdom (7)

Bit of ironnongery visible through chipped varnish? Calculator they use for working out spans (7) Black horse overtaking taxi (7) Retreat that's by no means

satisfactory (4)
Went inside camouflaged tree-den (7) Dishonesty in piano exercises unnatural? (5,8) Funny man in comic duo's impossible to contact (13) Cloth employed in the

much (5) 20 Late riser? (7) Heavenly apparition turning women on? (3.4)

22 Decline to accept Norwe gian, say, is cause of ill-feeling (7) Army corps has to cover not spots (4)

the first tive correct sounds of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. A day receive hardbacked copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. A swers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solution to Saturday Creasword, P. O. Box 4013. The Independent, I Canada Square Canary Wharf, London El 4 501. Please use the box number and postco and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: C Morcher, Warlingham

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Ferguson expecting his big names to rise to big game

Football

By Guy Hodgson

FIVE weeks ago Alex Ferguson was asked whether he would prefer a draw when Arsenal met Chelsea at Highbury the fol-lowing day. "No, I'd like an Arsenal win," he replied, leaving no doubts as to where he anticipated the greater challenge to come from.

The Manchester United manager was granted his wish but, as the landscape at the top of the Premiership has changed, so has the threat and he might regret it now. Arsenal beat Chelsea on 8 February and launched a charge which has taken them to within nine points of the champions with three games in hand.

A win at Old Trafford today and the one-horse title race that bookies had lost interest in wili suddenly contain a stable of contenders. But if United win every one else will look to second place as the limit of their ambition and turf accountant's books shut all over Britain. Today's match is that important.

Ferguson, who is known to like a bet, concurs with that assessment and will be hoping his team revert to one character trait rather than indulge their inclination to, in his own words, "make things hard for ourselves".

"I think we're recognised as big game players and I confidentily expect my team to be up for this one," he said yesterday. "They always are on these occasions. This is a big, big game, and if we win it I think it will just about clinch the title for us.

P W D L F A WD L F A PtsGD Man Utd ..30 11 2 1 35 6 7 4 5 23 16 60+36 Arsenai....27 10 2 2 29 9 4 7 2 17 17 51 +20

Remaining fixtures

MAN.

UNITED IS Apr Newcastic (+1)

27 Apr C Palace (A) 2 May Leeds (H) 10 May Barnsley (A)

Race for the Premiership

Today Arseni (H) Today Man Uci (A) 28 Mar Wimbledon (H) 28 Mar Sheff Wed (H) 31 Mar Bolton (A) 4 Apr Liverpool (A)

ARSENAL 13 Apr Backburn (A) 29 Apr Derby (H) 18 Apr Wimbledon (H) 2 May Everton (H) 25 Apr Bansley (A) 10 May A VBz (A)

We've only seven matches to go after this one and games are running out for our rivals. Of course, if Arsenal get a result it'll mean we're in for a cliff hanger."

"In fairness to us, we've perhave prevailed. formed in all the big games this season. We won at Liverpool, Chelsea and Newcastle and beat Biackburn at Old Trafford and even though we lost at Highbury in November we were denied a blatant penalty that day."

The match at Highbury has little bearing on today's match in the same way that the nuances of play had scant relevence to the changing score-

ham directing the traffic, and yet went 2-0 down. In the end Arsenal throughly deserved their 3-2 win, as Ferguson acknowledged, but both teams might

The main lesson learned could be that Arsenal can afford periods and still prosper, as they did against Wimbledon at Selhurst Park on Wednesday. "The way we played there is exactly what we'll need at Old Trafford," their manager, Arsène Wenger said. "a mixture of high skill and typical Arsenal character."

Wenger has also said that a line in November. United began draw might prove to be a good magnificently, Teddy Shering- result so the Gunners are un-

Italian first language at Palace

The new player-coach at Crystal Palace yesterday gave his first press conference - entirely in Italian. However, reports that the Premiership strugglers are now a nursery club for Juventus were said to be greatly exaggerated.

Attilio Lombardo has taken over team affairs, with the manager, Steve Coppell, stepping aside to become director of football development. Lombardo will be assisted by his Italian speaking team-mate, the former Swedish international Tomas Brolin.

likely to be going out with all barrels blazing, and any preference for the counter-attack will be aided by the absence of Nicky Butt, who tends to tidy

things up in midfield. The most influential absence, greater even than Ian Wright's. could prove to be Ryan Giggs. Without the Welsh winger opponents have been able to channel United towards the middle where big centre-backs have picked off long balls to Teddy Sheringham and Andy Cole.

David Beckham might be the best crosser in the Premiership but he rarely gets outside his full-back on the right flank and with no real threat on the flanks there has been a predictability about their play in recent times. In their last eight games they to sumender the midfield for long have scored only seven times

and gained only 11 points. Arsenal have been predictable, too, but only in the number of games they have been winning recently.

"We have found our consistency again now and the spirit and quality in the side is as strong as ever," Wenger said. "We have had very many problems with injuries and suspensions but we have shown we can overcome. them. For me, even quality is not enough unless you have spirit \$ And, above all, consistency is the main thing at the top level.

"There is a bit more pressu" on United, but not enough y Two or three weeks ago the tle was just a dream for us people laughed when I sal could do it."

No one will be lang they win at Old Traffor. Least of all Ferguson.

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

YOURMONEY

Personal finance and property Saturday 14 March 1998 New pension plans in a ,tangle Plans to simplify pensions by using give low-cost private pensions to more than 8 million workers who only have state pensions is A key reform, under which Life insurers, which provide

kitemarks could be brought down by Brussels. By Mark Colgate

The Government's drive to in jeopardy because of European laws.

the Government has planned to slash the cost of regulation by putting "kitemarks" on cheap pensions, would put an entire swathe of pension providers outside the law.

nearly a third of all private pensions to date, this week warned they could not sell "stakeholder pensions", a central plank of the Government's welfare reforms. if they were kitemarked.

The European Union's Third Life directive" makes it illegal for insurance companies to offer products that are preapproved by the Government. or kitemarked, because it would supposedly kill off competition.

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According to the insurers, the law could also block the Government from cutting the cost of regulating Individual Savings Accounts by using a kitemark.

This means a widely touted method of reducing the cost of long-term savings products, backed by the Association of British Insurers and investment houses such as M&G, is in effect no longer an option for

the Government. As the Government looks to expand the availability of investment products to the less well paid, one of its primary concerns has been to keep costs to an absolute minimum.

Kitemarking would be one means of doing so because it cut out large costs to the consumer. The idea was that the Government would authorise certain products as approved for sale to

anyone. This would eliminate much of the cost of sales regulation as well as reducing the cost of financial advice. In its submission to the Gov-

ernment on pensions reform. Standard Life says the overall costs of creating, selling and advising on a pension worked out at 18 per cent of all the money put in. Of this, 8.5 per cent consisted of the cost of advice, be it through a financial adviser or-

direct sales force. Ironically, the relevant elements in Europe's Third Life directive, which make it illegal for insurance products to be kitemarked, were introduced by the British in an attempt to open up the German market to external competition.

But not all sellers of pensions and investment products will be affected. Unit trusts are not subject to the European life directives and so could slot in to any kitemarking or preapproval regime for either ISAs

Virgin Direct, which has been a keen advocate of kitemarking for stakeholder pensions, has its own pension set up through unit trusts, not through a life company.

Martin Campbell, product development manager at Virgin Direct, says: "We understand there would be a number of problems with the Third Life directive and we hope there is

a way round this. We would certainly not want only a small segment of the market to be eligible for kitemarking."

Virgin says it wants a kitemark to be awarded to clear, transparent and flexible products to help attract the 6 million people who currently do not save. Mr Campbell said: "We

would like to have kitemarking extended to all financial products. This would not tell the customers the product is the best for them but it would mean they would avoid all sorts of hidden

The unit trust industry's own trade body has come down against the need for kitemarks.

Philip Warland, director of Autif. said. "The first problem with kitemarking is moral

hazard. People could see it as a recommendation to purchase and if that happens and the product does not work in some sense, the Government will eventually foot the bill.

Secondly, if some products are kitemarked what does this say about products which are not, even if some of them would be more suitable for some individuals than the kitemarked version? Finally there is a difference between cost and value, not all low-cost products offer good value.

"I imagine the Government is seeking a product that is accessible, safe, flexible and has clear charging structures and above all is one that is recognised and authorised by a regulator. This is exactly what a

industry faces its own problem down the line with pensions. There is a move among investment groups to convert unit trusts into a more recent investment vehicle, the openended investment company or Oeic. As yet there is no legislation in place to allow Oeics to be used as pensions vehicles.

However, the unit trust

Association of British Insurers'

tax committee, said: "The UK

Government said three years

ago it was looking to remove

pre-certification on qualifying

policies issued by life assurance

companies. While it is still a re-

quirement of UK law it is out-

lawed by European law. If there

were any objections on the

Continent, the UK government

would have to move swiftly."

The insurance industry is fighting back by trying to find a formula which is as close as possible to kitemarking without having to resort to pre-approval of life products.

So far, the Third Life directive has not had a big impact because no one on the Continent has complained about pre-approval in the UK.

Paul Grace, who heads the

Superwoman and Virgin

Nicola Horlick, the City fund manager known as superwomen because of her five children and seven-figure earnings has been bet £6,000 that she cannot beat a fund with no manager. Virgin Direct challenged her to beat the FT-SE Actuaries All-Share Index which is tracked by Virgin's fund and charges half as much as the growth fund she runs for SocGen, her new employer.

Rush for tax freedom

As Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, puts the finishing touches to Tues day's Budget, investors are rushing to seize their taxfree allowances for the 1997/98 tax year. Our writers explore how the rich are getting away from the taxman - and how the average investor can try to do the same.

Pages 6-10

Bargain home loans

The Mortgage Operation, Coventry Building Society and Bradford & Bingley have all launched bargain mortgages this week, with some rates fixed for five years at 6.2 per. Some are even lower. But surely there must be a catch!

Ultra-cheap pension

Eagle Star has slashed pension charges to a new low for customers who save substantial sums before the financial year ends on 5 April. Cuscorners who arrange by telephone to save a lump sum of more than £20,000 will be charged just 0.5 per cent a year.

Decisions, decisions for Midshires carpetbaggers

City analysts are predicting a bidding war for Birmingham Midshires which could see its 1 million members offered windfalls approaching £1,000 each - more than 50 per cent in excess of what they expected.

Members of Birmingham Midshires Building Society are already facing the prospect of a £150 boost in their cash windfall after Halifax put in a bid for the society this week. More than 1 million members

were expecting an average windfall of about £600 through Royal Bank of Scotland's proposed takeover deal of up to £630m for Midshires. The exclusive deal was set up in August, seven months ago.

But after Halifax barged in unexpectedly with a higher offer of £780m, society members could now be eligible for that little bit of extra help, with an average windfall of about £750.

While the board of Birmingham Midshires is supposed to be bound to its RBS agreement, the City believes it cannot ignore the Halifax offer. If he board talks to Halifax, other bidrs are expected to weigh in. John Leonard, a top banking ana-

at Salomon Smith Barney, says: "It be open season for Birmingham nires. I expect Lloyds Bank and wich to be among the bidders." what does this battle for the mean for members? Carpet-Telepht Midshires – perhaps mare The bidding war for Birmingham Midshires must be good news for members, writes Sophie Tullis

than a quarter of all members - will be laughing all the way to the newly converted bank. More than 300,000 of them rushed to open new accounts during 1996 to 1997, on speculation that the society would convert.

Halifax claims its deal is better, because former members will be able to have access to its products and services as well as getting more money.

According to RBS, its deal is not just about money; it guarantees to run Midshires as an independent operation for three years after the takeover, protecting all the jobs and branches in the UK.

A group of rebel members, called Save our Building Societies, who are campaigning to prevent the Midshires

Northern Rock .

from becoming a bank, think the takeover tussle could help its campaign.

Campaign co-ordinator and member Bob Goodall says: "We wouldn't say the deals were better either way. We will reflect the view of the members who are contacting us. Some will go for the money, but we just want

to keep the society going. "Whether Royal Bank of Scotland less attractive."

The campaign now has enough supporters - 122 members - to force

or Halifax takes it over, mortgages will become more expensive and savings

a special meeting to discuss both bids and potentially block either of them. Some doubt remains over whether Midshires' mortgage rates will go up

Average windfall payouts for ex-building societies which converted to banks last year ateb moisrayance 2 June 1997 £2,400.00 £1,344.25 21 April 1997 7 July 1997 £1,948.00 \$2,260.00 1 Oct 1997

if it is taken over. Unlike other mutuals, it has never tried to compete on

unit trust is."

Birmingham Midshires has a standard variable rate for mortgages of 8.7 per cent, which is the same as Halifax's rate.

Royal Bank of Scotland's standard variable rate for mortgages is also 8.7 per cent, but seven out of 10 of its borrowers take out its flexible mortgage, which is more competitive, at 7.95 per

Members who like the smell of money and want to get as big a windfall as possible will probably want to be able to vote for the Halifax deal. Those who want to make sure

branch is still down the road will probably prefer to vote for the Royal Bank of Scotland deal. The Birmingham Midshires' board of directors, which has a duty to look after the long-term interests of its

members, has yet to give a clear steer

their local Birmingham Midshires

on which deal it will recommend. Midshires chief executive Mike Jackson says: "There are a myriad of things to consider [on behalf of members]. The RBS offer is a great deal in the round; on service, price, looking after our people who are responsible for that service, and making sure there are branches in the

There are thousands of decisions

and thought processes to go through. We will not be rushed into making a decision on the hoof."

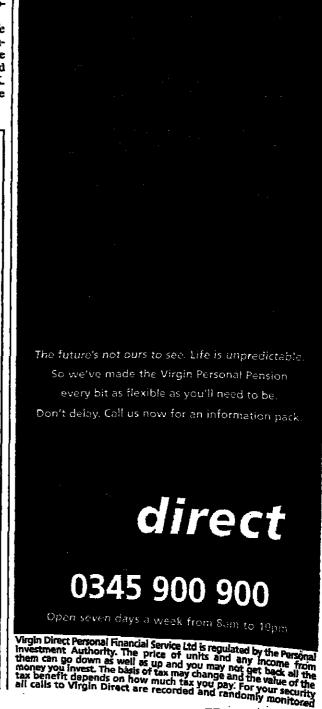
He adds: "Until we have evaluated Halifax's proposal, it is not possible to say what that deal is like."

Jackson, whose home phone number is available to all at the society, plays down any potential rebellion from members. He says he has had eight calls in seven days from members, six of which were about the deal. One wanted to stay mutual, one wanted a higher price and the others wanted clarification, although they were happy about the society con-

Jackson and other directors may be answering calls, but their service does not extend to a written response, according to Sobs, which claims that many members who have written to directors have still to receive replies.

The Midshires board is in a tricky position. It has an obligation to the members to consider the Halifax deal. But it is understood that Midshires is already obliged to put the RBS deal to members, although it does not have to recommend it.

The Birmingham Midshires directors will have to make their views clear in the transfer document which is due to go out next month. The vote on the RBS offer is scheduled for June. But whatever the directors recommend, it will be the members who decide.



ANDREW VERITY



The nasty legacy of endowments

This week the full cost of the biggest financial scandal in your endowment would grow this country's history, the mis-selling of personal pen- a year - then there is unlikesions, was finally given an of- ly to be a problem. But some ficial price tag: £11bn. Both sales people were less scrupuregulators and Government lous. Keen to sell an endoware now steely in their resolve ment (loadsamoney), rather to clean up the mess: there will be compensation. Unfortunately, the regu-

lators are much less strident about another nasty legacy of the late 1980s and early 1990s: the mis-selling of endownents. Evidence is piling up that hundreds of thousands of endowment holders have been led to expect much more from the policies than they will actually get.

Actuaries is a powerful body representing the professionals who have the job of sharing out life insurers' investment funds. This week it warned that endowments would pay out much less in the coming years than they have done.

Those who bought an endowment in 1973 are pay off their mortgages. laughing. Payouts this year have reached record levels. A saver who put in £50 a month (totalling £15,000 savings). would see a payout close to £100,000. Before tax, they have got a return worth

roughly 16 per cent a year. The future looks less rosy. Long-term interest rates have hit a nadir of 6 per cent and inflation is widely expected to stay low. Invest- print. ment returns are expected to be closer to 10 than 16 per cent. That leads actuaries to anticipate a 5 per cent fall in payouts - every year. By 2006, the same 25-year policy is likely to pay just over £50,000.

For some of those with an endowment mortgage, this is unpleasant news.

If you were led to believe modestly - at, say, 7 per cent than a repayment (no commission), they referred people to the double-digit returns of the 1970s and 1980s. "You can pay off the mortgage AND get a lump sum at the end," they typically said. An honest sales person would

unlikely event that these dazzling returns keep up". By assuming that policies would grow quickly, financial The Institute & Faculty of advisers could offer cheaper premiums to the unwitting homebuyer. But the cheaper the premiums, the riskier

have added - "but only in the

A substantial minority of endowment holders - possibly over a million people now face the danger that their endowments will not Those most in danger are those who bought policies between 1982 and 1987, when sales people assumed high investment growth.

Scammy mortgages didn't stop with the 1980s. As our piece on page 5 shows, homebuyers are still being offered apparently cheap mortgages which sometimes have nasty catches in the small

What are the regulators doing about this? Nothing there aren't any regulators. Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, is still umming and ahing about whether the new Financial Services Authority should regulate mortgages. Of course it should, and quickly

Add some PEPs to future plans

THE MAKEOVER Name: Phil and Jane Dunn Occupation: Advertising make-up manager and occupational therapist. The problem: How to find the most tax-efficient way of making the most of savings and providing for their daughter -- who was excluded from receiving windfall shares because of

The advice: By making the most of tax-free allowances in PEPs before they disappear next year, the Dunns can maximise the opportunity to make their money grow.

Having a young daughter just two years and 10 months old has made Phil Dunn and his wife, Jane, think long and hard about their future financial planning.

higher-rate taxpayer, earning £30,000 a year, any tax saving is important.

leading independent financial advi. 31 Bates & Partners, based in Leeds. Telephone: 0113 295 5955.

will need to act quickly if he wants to Spencer unit trust.



Thinking about long-term investments: Phil and Jane Dunn with daughter Rebecca

Phil, 44, who works as an advertising make-up manager, has so far been wary about putting money into personal equity plans (PEPs) because of the longer-term commitment which this type of investment requires. However, now that Phil enjoys a greater on deposit. Phil has a balance of feeling of job security, he would like to consider this tax-efficient means of saving since clearly, as a borderline

The Adviser: Graham Bates, of the

available to Phil as far as PEPs are con- PEPs, which can provide this potential. cerned. The first is to choose the regular savings route, which would allow as little as £20 per month to be squirrelied away from any surplus monthly income. Alternatively, Phil could

make use of his general PEP allowance for the current tax year, which ends on 5 April. PEPs are in their closing stages, with no further investment expected to be allowed after 5 April 1999, so Phil would be wise to make the most of any allowances before they disappear.

One option would be to use some for any purpose. of the capital, which is presently sitting around £6,000 held in a savings account with the Clydesdale Bank earning 5.2 per cent net. Although this is a fair rate for a short-term investment, there is the potential for a significantly higher return proving Phil can invest for five years or longer and is willing to accept a medium-risk strategy, which he says bray Building Society. he is happy to do. Since maximising long-term capital growth is his primary objective, he would be sensible to -The Advice: There are two channels consider investment vehicles such as

Marks & Spencer unit trust Jane, who works as a Probation Officer, has already dipped her toe into stock market waters by taking out a choose to invest a lump sum. But he PEP which invests in a Marks and

region of £7.500 and Jane has already growth, particularly if he is willing to earmarked this investment for the future - to help towards the cost of her daughter's school fees. One of the benefits which PEPs offer is the flexibility to access the money as required and of course, the proceeds can be used

Tessa roll-over

The Dunns have both made use of Tes-. sas. Phil has an account with the Abbey National to which he has contributed all but the final £600. Jane's first Tessa has already matured and she has opted for a second "roll-over" account, taken out through the Me)ton Mow-

By choosing to roll-over the £9,000 capital, Jane keeps her money in a taxfree environment for a further five years, even though new Tessa investments will no longer be allowed following the introduction of the new Individual Savings Account on 5 April

Phil, however, would be wise toconsider a variety of options before he opts for a second Tessa, since other types of investment might prove to be

The plan has a current value in the more fruitful in his quest for capital the right home for these savings. Phil accept a balanced approach to risk.

The Woolwich account

The future of their young daughter is clearly a priority and Phil has already established a savings account with Woolwich for her benefit. Each month, Phil pays £20 into the account plus whatever is in his daughter's money box, usually bringing the total to around £30. According to Phil, the return is miserly but his biggest gripe with Woolwich is that, being a minor, his daughter did not qualify for windfall shares when the society converted last year to a bank. Understandably, therefore, Phil has very little loyalty to the Woolwich and wants to know what he should do with these funds (about £1,500 to date) to give his daughter the best start in life.

Given the benefit of the long-term investment horizon, which is possible because his daughter is still so yourge. the sensible approach would be to invest the capital in an environment which offers the potential for sub-

should consider using one or more unit trust funds and he would be wise to seek the advice of an independent adviser. Many unit trust savings plans will also accept on-going monthly contributions and this is an excellent way to save because you get the benefit of the "smoothing out effect" on unit prices.

Another consideration for Phil is his pension. As a member of his employer's scheme, he contributes £100 each month but admits that he has not changed the level of contributions in the last nine years. At 44, he should address the question of maximising pension with his adviser at the earliest opportunity.

Fortunately, Phil and Jane have a small mortgage of just £26,000 against their home, which is valued at £125,000. Last year the mortgage proved to be a benefit when Phil received 200 windfall shares as a result of Halifax's flotation. Wisely, he has clung on to the shares, which have so far proved to be an excellent investstantial long-term capital appreciation. ment. Who knows what they might be A deposit account is definitely not worth when his daughter comes of age!

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consultation and the final form is not yet known.

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FT-SE ALL SHAPE INDEX	NA	N/A	N/A	+57.2%	+103.5%

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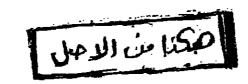
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Fragile but more

vase, below left, by Emile Gailé from the turn of

the century

portable than furniture: table lamp, left, and





ROBIN AMLÔT INTERNET **INVESTOR**

Of cookie monsters and search engines

First Direct, Britain's first and cookie? That depends on how biggest "direct" banking business much you value your privacy. plans to offer PC Banking free is not an internet-based service been on free trial to 5,000 customers since June last year. First access if you refuse the cookies. Direct says it may offer the service over the internet in the fu- Another piece of web jargon you ture, depending on customer demand. I had planned to review the service in some detail - there its service on the bank's website.

looked at the website is because match specified criteria. it will not let me. Well, that's not out sending a "cookie". Normally, I avoid techno-jargon but this is one piece of it of which anybody using the web needs to be aware.

The best analogy for a cookie is Caller ID on telephones. Caller ID lets the person you are calling know your telephone the same way. A website knows who has logged on by looking at website that uses cookies, it will remember the next time you visit. Anything you do at a website that uses cookies it can also repattern - allowing the business behind the site to tailor its products to you and target you with special mailshots.

goes, smooth the path of con- tories (which tend not to be sumerism, making sure you only get business offers that interest you. They have also sparked a se-

let you access its website without mation Net Directory (FIND). sending a cookie. Which raises two questions. First, is it polite First Direct: for a website to do this? No, it www.firstdirect.co.uk. is not. (Imagine being escorted FinanceWise: out of your local supermarket by www.financewise.co.uk a bouncer because you refused UK Personal Finance Directory: to tell them your address.) Sec- www.moneyworld.co.uk ond, is it safe to accept the FIND: www.find.co.uk

3 par of the contact of the contact

The bottom line is I didn't feel of charge to its customers. This like accepting First Direct's cookie. So I did not get to view but an intranet, on the bank's own the website. Many commercial secure private network. It has websites now have cookies, However, most tend not to refuse you

may come across is "search engine". Search engines are the internet's telephone directories, is apparently a demonstration of basically automated programmes which seek out and note the ad-The reason why I baven't dresses of other websites which

This month a new engine, quite true. It will not let me with- Finance Wise, made its debut on the web. Set up by Risk Publications and IBM's Securities and Capital Markets Division, it is a free web search engine for banking and finance professionals. But it is also going to be a handy tool for individual investors.

By indexing only sites and number. Cookies work in much pages relevant to the world of banking and finance, Finance-Wise bypasses the millions of your cookie. Anything you tell a megabytes of irrelevant data returned with mainstream search engines. In fact, it is the only engine to offer three types of search option. You may search by keymember, tracking a behaviour word; by specific classes of products, suppliers, information or companies; or by sector listings.

Finance Wise is the first search engine to focus specifically on fi-Cookies, so the argument nancial websites. However, direcautomated) of financial websites have been available for some time, including the UK Personal rious debate about privacy issues. Finance Directory on Money-Anyway, FirstDirect will not world and the Financial Infor-

Nouveau riches for year 2000

Collect to invest: Art Nouveau is the ideal look for the new millennium, argues John Windsor

cides with the centenary of the Paris Exposition Universelle that established Art Nouveau as a major force in art and design. Already, curators bid at Sotheby's New York last of European mus-

enms are vying to display important pieces of Art Nouveau glass, furniture, metalwork and poster art owned by private collectors. In London, the V&A's contribution will be a big exhibition, Decadence and Dreams: Art Nouveau 1890–1914.

Canny investors are already keying in "2000: Art Nouveau" in their electronic pocket diaries and casting around for what to buy. Glass by Gallé,

Tiffany, and Daum - fragile, but more portable than furniture - looks a good bet. With its swirling organic decoration it is the quintessence of the Art Nonveau ide-

al of applied art - literally, applying art to everyday objects, an ideal that the year 2000 will endorse. After the spectacular crash of Art Nouveau glass in 1991, when the

Japanese, having bid stratospheric prices, made a dramatic withdrawal from the market to attend to their own financial crash back home, the names of Tiffany, Gallé and Daum have given investors the jitters.

The millennium will have an Art investors-Americans, Greeks, Swiss, Nouveau look. The year 2000 coin- French, Italians - have cautiously entered the bidding, pushing prices up to mid-Eighties, pre-crash levels.

The \$470,000 (about £287,000),

magic year 1900, is "immensely gratifying result", according to Philippe Garner of Sotheby's London. It may not be a But it is not as fine. It is acid-etched but not hand-cut. The finest Gallé has several kaleidoscopic, multi-coloured layers of glass, some worked into the a wisteria lamp surface while still hot and then both 4,995,000 French francs (about etched and band-carved, using a £500,000) - paid wheel like a dentists' drill. for a less exquisite 1900 specimen at nomenal craftsmanship should - in an ideal world - deter crass specu-Sotheby's Monte Carlo in October lators from bidding blindly for anything by a known Art Nouveau 1990, just before the crash. But it name. The price that will be paid for shows that collec- this month's wisteria lamp will, hopetors are bidding fully, indicate a discriminating market capable of restraint. A silly, high confidently without taking leave price, would raise fears of another

The need to appreciate the phe-

For slimmer wallets, the sale has

prices are rising on the coat-tails of

the better-known Daum and Gallé.

us after well over a century. Its re-

vival in the Sixties may have faded,

Originally a fashionable, avant-

boom-and-bust cycle.

December for an

enchanting Gallé

wisteria table

lamp, made in the

Vendors, no longer fearful half a dozen Daum vases estimated their Art Nouveau in the £2,000-£6,000 range. It is also glass will be left on the block, are con- worth looking at glass designed by lesser names, such as the Austrian

of their senses.

signing more of it to auction. At Mr Garner's auction on Friday 20 March Loetz (estimated from £1,200), whose there are 41 pieces - mainly vases and table lamps - by the Frenchman Gallé, 39 by his one-time co-worker Daum, and five by the American Tiffany. Mr garde style, Nouveau Art is still with Garner has raised the minimum lot value to an up-market £1,500.

The forthcoming sale includes a 24- but it refuses to go away. Mr Garner inch high Gallé wisteria table lamp, says: "It has earned its credentials as more than three inches taller than the a mainstream subject - not in fashion, But since then, prices have bot- one that fetched \$470,000 in De- but not in danger of going out of fashtomed out, and new collector- cember. It is estimated at what seems ion, either - and I don't see why it



shouldn't continue to maintain its to be a knock-down £35,000-£45,000. position in the long term".

Fun for investors will be to assess just how closely the spirit of Art Nouveau chimes in with the spirit of the New Bond Street, London W1 (0171millennium. Its strength is that it is 293 5000).

not just a style but a movement, with ideals that are cherished today more than ever. It stands for the synthesis of art and craft, for the humanisation of mass-production. And its florid abundance offers a dream of plenty to a population tired of arid minimalism and the dour philosophy of

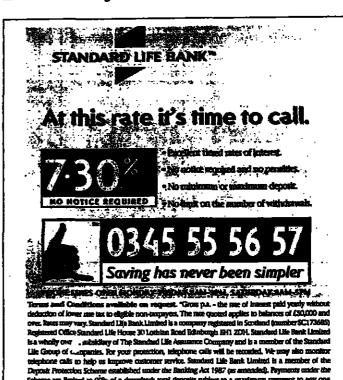
"small is beautiful". A minus point

is that its decoration is sometimes

"applied" in the worst sense - that

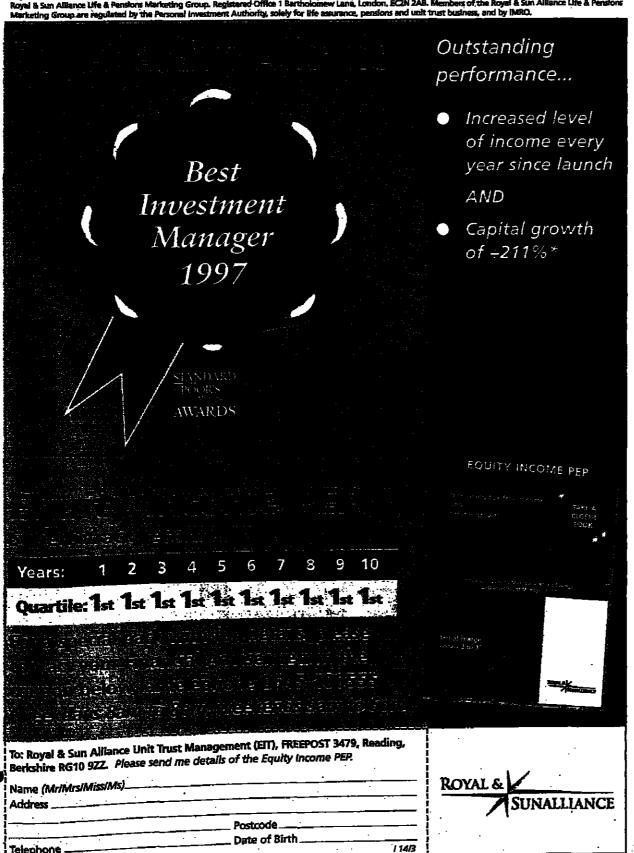
is, as an excrescence. Art Nouveau's runaway lines - the swirling hair of half-clad maidens draped with lilies - make it heady, exotic, mysterious. When all the design history has been chewed over, it is perhaps this quality that gives it its deepest appeal. You might say that Nouveau Art is dead weird. But, these days, aren't we all?

Applied Arts from 1880: Friday, 20 March, (10.30am), Sotheby's, 34-35

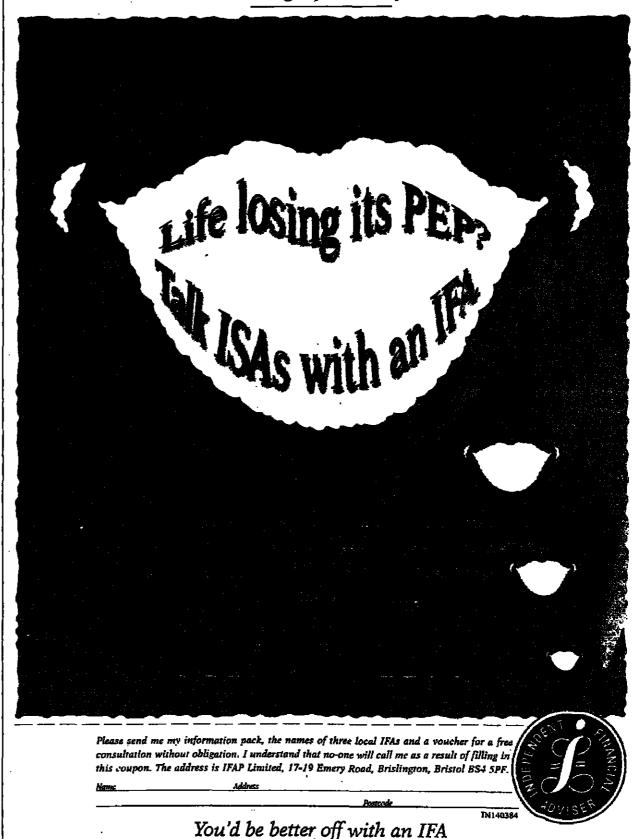


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BRIAN TORA

Laggards and leaders

the FTSE 250 and the Small-Cap Indices move into new high ground this week. The bad news is that it highlights how difficult it is to find value amongst the top 100 companies. Still, at least it shows that UK managers are not completely bound into buying only those shares that the global money shunters are prepared to consider.

Of course, it remains the increasing popularity of tracker funds that have been driving the big market capitalisation stocks. Witness the way in which Misys shed a few pennies while Compass price on the news that the contract caterer rather than the IT specialist achieved the coveted place in the in-dex of Britain's 100 most successful companies.

It was Dixons that received the wooden spoon. It tells you a lot about UK PLC when a leading retailer loses its coveted slot and the main contenders are pure service businesses. Interestingly, Misys would have been the only IT company to have

earned a place in the index. How different things are in the US. Aside from the fact that Microsoft is now the world's second or third-largest company in terms of market capitalisation, you only have to see the way in which any business linked with helping the internet operate finds its shares instantly in demand. I f you look at the top 25 internet companies in America, you find they are worth in aggregate nearly \$40hn. Very appropriate, you may say, but most of them do not make a profit. That amounts to a great deal of faith out there concerning the world wide w). I hope it is justified. If I were seeking to tuck money away wisely at pre-

How reassuring it was to see sent, I would be tempted to trawl the second 250 stocks in the FTSE Index. Sometimes known as the Tootsie. these are now big companies, many of them worth comfortably over £1bn. They have been left out of the equity rush, partly because they tend not to excite those American managers trying to gain a toe-hold in Europe.

It is the growth of support for FTSE 100 funds that causes me most concern. What happens if the market takes a dive? Just as indexation has become a driving force for the market, so it could accelerate any bear received a boost to its share market and intensify its severity. At least a reverse would give active managers a chance to come back into their own.

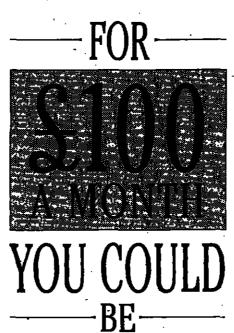
At present our own researchers rather favour two acronyms from within the second tier of Britain's companies. BTP and Emap are very different businesses. ·Capitalised at £600m and £21/bn respectively, one lingers just outside the FTSE 100, while the other represents a more typical mediumsize British company. Emap (or East Midlands Allied Press as it used to be known) has become less - much less - of a regional press concern that a European magazine and regional broadcasting group. BTP used to be known as British Tar Products and produces specialist chemicals for industrial giants. Both look capable of sustaining above average growth, while enjoying what is these days relatively modest ratings. Sadly, neither are technology stocks, but that may save you money in the short term.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee.

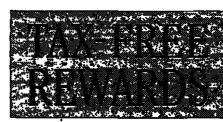
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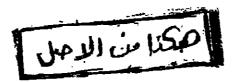
The reason for this is that they spread the risk across a wide portfolio of publicly-quoted companies. In addition, charges are kept to a minimum.

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The irresistible rise of the second liners



Ards and leaders

JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

Just as it was in the last great bull market which reached its peak in 1968-1972, the current stock market surge has been characterised by the extraordinary strength of large company shares and the relatively poor performance of smaller company shares.

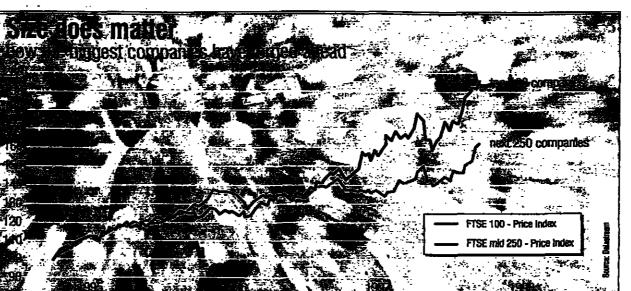
Any professional investors vestors' returns. who have failed to invest in largest companies over the last and emerging market funds, the searchers discovered what they two to three years has inevitably found themselves lagging behind in performance. As the chart shows, the Footsie index of 100 largest shares has comprehen-

sively outperformed the 250 index, which tracks medium-sized companies, and the All-Share.

The same phenomenon has taken its toll in the unit and investment trust business. The performance figures for funds which specialise in UK smaller companies tell their own story. The average unit trust in the smaller company sector has produced a return of 10.1 per cent since the start of 1997. The All-Share index, by contrast, has returned almost three times as much (27.0 per cent) over the same period. Even the very best performing fund in the smaller company sector has only returned 22.3 per cent, 5 per cent less than the market overall.

It is the same story, if not worse, in the investment trust world. Over three years the performance of smaller company specialist trusts has badly lagged that of the generalist trusts. At the same time, the discounts to asset value have widened, further depressing in-

In fact, apart from Far East smaller company sector trades on a wider average discount than any other investment trust sector -14.9 per cent, according to the efficient markets, there apbroking firm Nat West Markets. peared to be clear and sustain-



year (1993) when smaller comoutperformed the market as a whole. Ironically, it was only in the 1980s that academic re-

company underperformance investing in smaller company dates back several years. Since shares. In other words, returns 1988, there has only been one from smaller companies were higher than you would expect panies have comprehensively even after making allowance for their higher risk. As so often in the stock

market, no somer had this new phenomenon been discovered came to call the "small company than it started to vanish, Paul effect". This was the discovery Marsh and Elroy Dimson, two that, contrary to the principle of Professors at London Business School who have closely mon-

that for all intents and appearances the small company effect had now disappeared. All sorts of explanations -

some more convincing than pricing power. others - have been advanced to explain why smaller companies should fare better in some periods and not so well in others. The most obvious one relates to itored the small company effect mate. When the climate is sta- companies, by contrast - at if the dramatic recent outper-

able advantage to be had from from its first appearance, con-ble, so this argument goes, with cluded in their latest annual sur- low inflation and steady susvey published a few weeks ago tained growth, as it is now, it tends to favour larger companies. They have greater freedom to secure economies of scale and develop and exploit their

> By contrast, when inflation is high, and the economy turbulent, the inflexibility of large companies is a disadvantage. They find it harder to adapt to the prevailing economic cli-rapid shifts in demand. Smaller

ter able to obtain a competitive over other sections of the maredge. There are greater returns to entrepreneurship.

Whatever the reason, the interesting question now is past disparity in performance? whether the tide is once again about to turn in favour of smaller companies. There are fundamental reason why the certainly some pointers to that effect. The latest survey of fund manager intentions by Merrill Lynch suggests, for example, that institutional fund managers have recently started to increase their exposure to small and medium-sized companies.

On value grounds, many of these companies now look attractively priced, at least when compared with the demanding ratings of the biggest companies. Whichever way you look at it, shares in the FTSE 100 are not cheap. On a p/e ratio of 21, and a yield of 2.3 per cent, the Footsie index is discounting an awful of good news.

For tactical reasons, therefore, the arguments for looking elsewhere make sense. A number of US fund management houses are said to have been picking up shares in the FTSE 250 index in the last few weeks on value arguments of this kind. It would not be at all surprising

least those that survive - are bet- formance of the Footsie index ket was to falter this year.

But will it be more than a temporary rebalancing of the Scanning the visible economic horizons, it is hard to see any prevailing economic climate should turn against larger companies and back in favour of their smaller brethren. As the split in the Bank of England's monetary policy committee demonstrates, there are real concerns about the possibility of a short-term blip in inflation. But there are as yet no signs it will

be anything other than a blip. However, the value arguments for smaller companies may be more compelling. For anyone who follows a contrarian investment philosophy, the fact that the smaller company effect should now be being written off is a classic indicator that it may now be about to return.

Of course, if the current fashion for large company shares also proves to be the apotheosis of the whole bull market, then a return to relative favour may be of scant consolation. But a burst of short-term outperformance by smaller company specialists is now overdue.

The cost of cut-price mortgages

Discounts, fixed rates, capped Check the small rates, the permutations of cutprice mortgages seem endless. print before you Lenders want you to borrow. But where the incentives are Sign up for a cheap very attractive, is there a catch?

quire you to take life insurance and savings policies with the inone lender to another.

buildings, contents or accident, a premium of £403.44. sickness and unemployment Act. As a result, buying one or SVR, equalling 6.3 per cent for the first one runs out." from a lender can be made a per cent fixed for three years. rently offering a one-year fixed condition of qualifying for a discount loan.

Because these products are not sold on the "best advice" products, lenders are not obliged to find you the cheapest cover available.

Of course, discounted and fixed-rate loans are still available if you insist on finding your own insurance, but you must expect to incur interest rate increases of between 0.25 per cent and 0.5 per cent on the cost of money borrowed.

Take buildings insurance as an example. This covers the rebuilding cost of the property to be purchased, which usually exceeds the market value by a factor of up to 50 per cent. Standard cover includes an accidental damage clause, against factors like fire and flood.

surance can vary massively. Asked to quote on identical terms - a flat in Edinburgh with

Lenders can no longer re- loan. By lain Morse

surer of their choice. Existing Insurance Service came up with policies should be fully trans- an annual premium of £59.72. ferable when you move from Meanwhile, National Direct quoted an annual premium of But this does not apply to £215.28, and Newcastle Direct

Both of these premiums more of these types of cover three years, and Newcastle 5.99 Take Scarborough BS, Other lenders like Woolwich, and Abbey National quoted at least £350pa while the mutual basis governing the sale of life a premium of £474.60 a year, again as part of a discounted

> Accident, sickness and unemployment policies are becoming more popular with lenders. Several offer them along with house or contents cover on the basis that borrowers must choose two out of ify for a discount mortgage.

According to Ray Boulger, Charcol, "In almost all cases, anyone under 40 can find cheaper ASU cover either direct from an insurer like ITT London & Edinburgh, or from a mortgage broker."

At least one reason why Premiums for building inlenders make these types of insurance compulsory are the a rebuild cost of £200,000, AA much as 40 per cent of premining your first loan to qualify.

ums paid over the policy term. Redemption penalties also apply to these loans, but the

basis for charging can differ widely. Some apply a fixed percentage of the amount borrowed. As a general rule, the greater the incentive, the greater the penalties of redeeming a loan before the set period.

According to Mr Boulger, anyone tempted by a special deal should look closely at the small print. "Avoid redemption penalties that last longer than (ASU) insurance. None of these were quoted as part of fixed-rate the discounted or capped rate is covered under the best advice packages. Nationwide offered a on offer. That way, you are free clauses of the Financial Services 1.8 per cent discount off their to look for another deal when

rate loan at just 1.25 per cent. A redemption penalty fixed at 7.19 per cent of the amount bor-Skipton BS came top, quoting rowed applies for the first five years of the loan. After the first 12 months, this loan reverts to Scarborough's SVR of 8.69 per cent, currently 0.2 of one per cent above the average charged by major lenders.

Most such redemption penalties are set at 5 per cent of the amount borrowed, but for those contemplating partial three of these policies to qual- early repayment, care is needed, as the penalty is set not on the outstanding balance at the time of mortgage broker John of redemption but the full amount for borrowed.

Early redemption penalties are avoidable, but only if you remortgage with the same lender, borrowing the same or more. Most will charge the penalty, then pay it back as a credit, reducing the amount of the new loan. But purchase of your new levels of commission their re- home will have to be completed ceive, which can amount to as within three months of redeem-

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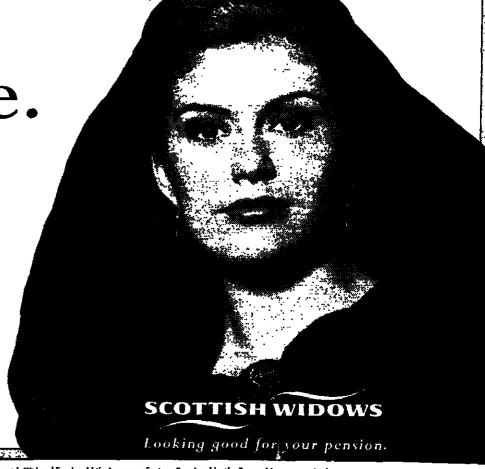
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The lure of offshore gains

As ISAs with their £50,000 cap loom, investors are sending their savings into exile. By lain Morse

the Budget looms. With the prospect of personal equity plans (PEPs) and tax-exempt pecial savings accounts (Tessas) being scrapped in 1999, the lure of these investments is

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information?

the coupon.

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A vintage year for PEPs.

<u>ក្រសួលពីពីពេលពីពិសេសពីពិសេសពីពិសេសពីពិសេសពេ</u>

Sales of offshore bonds and in- are putting cash into investsurance policies are booming as ments designed for expatriates.

Peter Nightingale, of accountants Deloitte Touche, strong. But savers tempted by here. They are sold as a substithe prospect of tax-free gains tute for good tax planning".

the investment trust in 1868

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Foreign (), Colonial

"to give the investor of moderate

Dunbar and Scottish Widows, have set up offshore arms based warus "many of these offshore in the Channel Islands, Dublin vehicles pay high commission to and Luxembourg. These havens intermediaries, and offer little levy tax on fund income of 20 real saving to anyone living percent or less, with no charge on capital gains.

> But UK taxpayers are still liable to tax on encashment of such policies, after deducting the original amount invested. The key difference is that because these funds roll up free of tax, they allow its deferral and should give better performance than UK based equivalents.

> Clerical Medical International estimate the net gain for shore bond could be as much as 10 per cent of the amount first invested, but only after holding the bond for 15 years or more. The gain for a higher-rate taxpayer is even greater, but early encashment brings heavy

A number of British insur- mostly run through Luxemance companies, like Allied bourg. These are similar to

> Nigel Davies of Arthur Anderson suggests "These can be useful for those with capital but no income. Funds pay only a 15 per cent withholding tax. Using both your personal allowance on income tax and annual exemption on capital gains means that you can realise up to £10,545 tax free."

Many UK banks and building societies also run offshore accounts, paying interest gross. Abbey National (Jersey) return 6.2 per cent gross for deposits of £10,000 or more on instant access. Onshore, their a basic-rate taxpayer in an off- 30-day account yields just 4.98 per cent gross for the same

Income tax is payable on interest received but for non taxpayers, rates can equal those from Tessas. If you have no other source of income, your personal allowance of £4,045 means Better value can be found in you can hold over £50,000 in an FSA recognised offshore funds, account paying 7 per cent gross.



New Year resolutions for the tax avoider

As a new Budget and the end of the tax year

approach, Tony Lyons does some financial

stock taking

It is at this time of year that we should all ensure we have made the best use the tax system for investing our hardearned savings.

With the financial year ending on 5 April, we should make full use of whatever tax benefits there are when L comes to putting our money away, whether saving for a rainy day, a comfortable retirement, or whatever. This year it's more important than

ever. On Tuesday, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will announce his new Budget. And it promises to be a wide-sweeping, tax reforming Budget.

We already know that personal equity plans (PEPs) and tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) have

be replaced with Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs).

But, as is usual at this time of year, rumours are swilling around about many other changes that may be announced. These include measures to limit tax avoidance even further, inshore investment.

Inheritance tax may also be changed. Another rumour is that pension investment made by individuals may only attract basic-rate income-tax relief. This latter piece of tittle tattle, however, sits badly with the Government's plans to issue a green paper later this year which will unveil its thoughts on future pensions provision, how it will enretirement, and its ideas on the creation of the stakeholder pension.

So now is a good time to get your mean you should suddenly switch your savings because of rumours, rather it is prudent housekeeping.

For example, PEPs have been an through the sifting process, this survey changes.

this tax year to run. After this, they will the region of £50bn invested in them means of tax-free investment. since they were first introduced in 1987. It makes sense to use your full alment, here are 10 rules to remember: iowance in what is left of this tax year

Never invest more than you can afand for 1998/99.

too high in the stock market and could benefits. be heading for a fall, there are various

Make sure you understand, and cluding culting the tax benefits of off- schemes available from a number of dif- like, what you are investing in. ferent managers that will guarantee at

least your original capital investment. But a word of caution. Never invest ings. You should only put your money you'll have. into an investment because it suits your purposes. Don't take risks you cannot financial advice if you feel you need it. look at meets your investment aims. Aflosing money.

Whether you are looking to put away the long term - five years or more - or time

just one more year and what's left of outstanding success with somewhere in looks at some of the currently available When looking to tax-free invest-

Even if you think share prices are Don't invest just because of the tax

Always compare charges.

■ Look at past performance of various competitors - it will not forecast the in anything just because it offers tax sav- future, but it may be the only guide

afford. Make sure that whatever you

If seeking advice, qualified independent financial advisers are best. ter all, the higher the risk, the more Some schemes, such as personal pencourage us to do more to save for our chance there is that you could end up sions, can be very inflexible, make sure you understand any penalties such as what happens if you stop payments. a lump sum or a regular amount each Make sure that you are happy to lock financial house in order. This does not month, whether you want to invest for up your savings for what could be a long

> the short term, there are various #Don't rush into an investment just beschemes on offer. In order to guide you - cause you fear the Budget could make

The Corporate Bond PEP

regulation. Source: LGDI 02003-081. The gross yield of the Fixed Interest Trust cields as at 9 March. I'm l'us performance not peop, unit a guide to nic performance. Foth capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested Adjumpursons of cost apple to PEPs investi which in that Trists. urrently applicable and an subject to 4 miles, claims The value of the relief wil the old on your make alual details are available on request Legal & General (Proc.) Landed, Register in Envised No. 2702(8). Regetered Office Temple Count, 11 Queen Victoria Minist London EC4N 477. the Legal & General marketing queup, member of which are regulated by the Personal Investment

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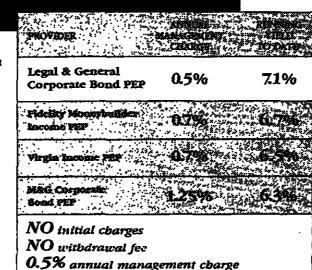
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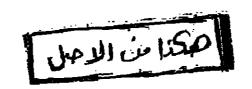
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The first shot in a tax offensive

Tax planners believe a Government crackdown on offshore trusts means we are in for a tough Budget. Paul Slade reports

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, acted last week to bring forward one of his planned Budget measures closing an obscure but lucrative tax loophole.

The loophole allowed rich offshore trust holders to save capital gains tax (CGT) by bringing trusts set up before 1991 back onshore (see box for details). Although only a few hundred people use this procedure, the sums involved are huge.

The Treasury believes that by bringing this planned Budget measure forward 11 days to apply from 6 March, it has saved up to £1bn in revenue which otherwise would have been lost.

Most of the people benefiting from the loophole were company directors involved in management buyouts or directors of privatised companies, both of whom could see enormous gains on the shares they held.

Whenever a Budget change like this is anticipated, the products to be barred are frantically promoted on a "buy-now-while-stocks-last" basis.

Philip Harrison, tax partner at Eversheds, a national law firm, says: "Although this has been known about

for years, it's only recently that it's become prevalent. Some of the specialist firms of tax consultants have been mail-shotting people. I think what's happened is that it had become too well-known, and the Government decided to crack down

Tim Jones, of accountants Arthur Andersen, says: "It was a very complex manoeuvre, involving very fancy professional fees. We're talking about really big gains here. One person could have £200m worth of gains. Capital gains tax on that, at 40 per cent, is £80m."

Mr Jones and Mr Harrison agree that this move suggests the Government will adopt a tough stance on other tax-planning measures. Mr Jones warns: "This flags the Government's intention to attack those trusts with shares in them which are pregnant with gains, and haven't yet been liquidated."

Mr Harrison says: "The Government is serious about putting a stop to this sort of thing. We all know that there have been plenty of people who have gone in for tax

"There have been lots of loopholes - entirely legal ones - and there's no way you can argue with the Government for closing some of those down."

A Treasury spokesman says: "The Chancellor has always made it clear that the Government is committed to looking at tax avoidance and closing loopholes in each Budget. This Budget is an opportunity to see what further loopholes or tax-avoidance measures need to be tackled."

The Chancellor is expected to use his Budget on 17 March to announce consultation on introducing a general anti-avoidance measure. One form this could take would be allowing the Inland Revenue to disregard any transaction if it believed the main purpose of that transaction was to

Many experts fear a provision like this would deter companies from making perfectly innocent transactions, for fear the Revenue would accuse them of trying to dodge tax.

Mr Harrison says a general measure would be workable only if the Revenue were prepared to clear planned transactions in advance.

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HOW THE OFFSHORE TRUSTS MANOEUVER WE buyout of Acme Ltd, a private In 1985 he sets up an offshore trast: the CGT, Offshore Farmer in his own name to buy the company's pass on the prospession to share capital of £50m. The trust is set up and run by a merchanic bank | Id London Offstore Permit (1 1 / B 1 1 2) Is based to be Charles In or need a rest of the Charles Active particular Strength and significant In the recent are point In the re



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Venture into trusts

standing in their personal equity plans (PEPs) are being inundated by their advisers with dehome for their money.

The marketing men at mansmaller companies have un-should be wary of plunging in.

Many investors with large sums Generous tax breaks mean VCTs are being hyped as PEP

substitutes. But, writes Tony Lyons, they're not without risks

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tails of new venture capital wrapped a number of VCTs to And the tax benefits are so gentrusts (VCTs) as an alternative tempt you to part with your erous that Gordon Brown may money. While they all extol the tax benefits of their investagement groups specialising in ment vehicle, ordinary investors speech on Tuesday.

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even be tempted to rein them in when he delivers his Budget

The rules about VCTs are

quite complex. They were introduced in the 1995 Budget to stimulate investment in small companies, either new start-ups or ones too tiny be listed on the Stock Exchange.

Currently, if you invest in VCTs, you will receive all the income from and growth in the value of the shares tax free. Up to £100,000 a year per person can be invested in VCIs. In addition, you will qualify for 20 per cent tax relief on the money you put in providing you hold the VCT shares for at least five years. You will, however, only benefit from this tax relief if you invest in new shares. And the tax benefits don't stop there.
Wealthy investors also benefit from what is called roll-over relief. This means that if you have made a healthy profit from investments elsewhere, if you invest this money in a VCT you can defer the gains until the time when you sell the trust's

So it's not surprising that new VCTs are currently on of-

fer from the likes of Murray Johnstone, which already runs two other funds; Guinness Flight: Elderstreet: Oxford Technology and some six or so other groups. In particular, they are trying to woo investors with significant sums already saved in PEPs who are worried about the proposed lifetime cap of £50,000 on Individual Saving Accounts (ISAs) when they are introduced next year and PEPs go out of existence.

But don't rush into buying a VCT just because of its tax benefits. These are high-risk investments. The managers can only buy into companies worth less than £10m. They may well be new enterprises in innovative hi-tech or biotechnology areas. By their very nature, small and start-up companies are more likely to go belly up than their larger competitors. It can take a manager time to

find a range of suitable investments for his fund. He or she may well want to have 20 or 30 companies in the portfolio to give a reasonable spread and failure. Under the rules, they must invest 70 per cent of their shares can be problem. If it's with private investors. This is

fully invested. If you are keen to invest in this area, you must be prepared to lock in your money for at least the five years to get the tax reliefs. Picking the right fund protection against any possible is crucial. If you pick a dud investment, selling the VCT

lose their tax breaks. In fact

none of the existing funds are yet

new VCT shares qualify for full income-tax relief and the right to defer capital gains tax, it will be difficult to find a buyer. This is why the shares in existing VCTs trade at well below net as-

Management groups with expertise in funding start-up companies may not be generally well-known household names

why you will probably need expert independent financial advice to find them. If you need a financial adviser, IFA Promotions (0117 971 1177) can out you in touch with some in your area. Among the management groups with VCIs who have plenty of experience in venture capital and have large enough funds are Advent (0171-630 9811), Baronsmead (0171-600 6655), Murray Johnstone (0800 289978) and Guinness Flight (0171-522 2111).



Make use of your last chance to pick up a Tessa

Should investors kick Tessas (taxexempt special savings accounts) out of bed now the Government has announced that they will be abolished to make way for the Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) in April 1999? The short answer is no.

Tessa will keep her charm right up until midnight on 4 April 1999. Since 1991, thanks to the then chancellor John Major, Tessa holders have been allowed up to salt away up to £9,000 out of the taxman's reach: £3,000 in y ar one, £1,800 in years two, three and four, and £600 in year five.

Savers with a Tessa maturing after five years may reinvest the full £9,000 capital into a follow-on Tessa, although they may not use the same route for reinvesting the income.

As they were designed to encourage long-term savings, the tax break on the interest applies only to money left in for the full five-year term, something that ISAs will aim to rec-

Tessas will remain attractive to investors up until 4 April 1999. Richard Shackleton explains why

tify with their open-ended investment terms.

Unlike an ordinary bank or building society savings account, Tessas usually pay a higher rate of interest, fixed over the life of the account. But with rates seemingly on the rise again this relative advantage has either narrowed or even disappeared altogether. Savers hoping to grab Tessas' higher rate for a few years might not be put off by this although they could be hit by the early withdrawal penal-

ties imposed by many providers. To compensate for the changing interest rate climate, some providers have brought out "escalator" Tessas, which give progressively higher rates. For instance, Woolwich pays 5.75 per cent in the first year, followed by 6.50 per cent, 7 per cent, 8 per cent.

and 9 per cent in years two to five. Another innovation has been the equity-linked Tessa, which allows investors a limited exposure to the stock market, using derivative instruments tied to a UK market index. typically the FTSE 100. HSBC/Midland, Bristol & West, Birmingham Midshires and Abbey National all offer this sort of product. But equity-

permit withdrawals at all. They also, of course, expose investors to risk. So how should savers view the transition period between Tessas and ISAs? Under the current proposals,

any Tessa started before 5 April 1999

will be allowed to run its full five-

years, with no loss of tax breaks.

penalties if the money is needed be-

fore the five years are up or do not

linked Tessas either have steep

Once the Tessa matures, savers will be able to transfer whatever they accrued in the account - although not the interest earned - into an ISA so long as the transfer does not take them over the proposed overall cap on ISA investments. Savers will, therefore, fall into

two camps: those who can transfer their Tessa cash into an ISA, and those who are caught out by the lifetime cap. However, and this is the key point, neither group will really be much worse off. Savers who can transfer their Tessa money without exceeding the ISA limit in are in exactly the same position now as they were before ISAs were announced.

Savers who think the lifetime cap will stop them transferring their Tessa cash into an ISA will still benefit from five years' tax-free interest. The only thing they will lose is the right to roll over their capital into a new, tax-free account

Ú,

Nource Scottish Widows. Returns on 1 November 1997 on a regular saving amount of £50 a month from November 1987 to October 1997 methative. Relates to a man aged 24 for the 10 year cash option value of a similar plan to the Frentier Savings Plan. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. With profits maturity and surrender values cannot be guaranteed in advance. The information given here is based on Sautish Wildows' understanding of current tax law and inland Revenue practice - these may change in future. Source: Micropal, offer to bid, gross income reinvested, from 26/2/96 to 2/3/98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of your investment may fall as well as rise and is not quaranteed. You may not get back the full amount invested. Please be aware of the Government's proposed tax changes. TPEPs will no longer exist after April 1999. At this point the Government intends to introduce a new tax-efficient individual Savings Account (ISA). At present, a limit of £50,000 is proposed for contributions including transfers of existing investments to an ISA. However, the consultation process is not yet complete and the exact details of the ISA may change. "The offer is a 1% discount on the initial charges when Alliance & Leicester plc. Registered Office: 49 Park Lane, London W1Y 4EQ. Registered in England. Company No: 3263713. Authorised as a banj pursuant to the Banking Act 1987. Member of the British Bankers Association. The Alliance & Leicester Marketing Group, consisting of hance & Lexcester plc and Alliance & Leicester Life Assurance Company Limited, which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority, and

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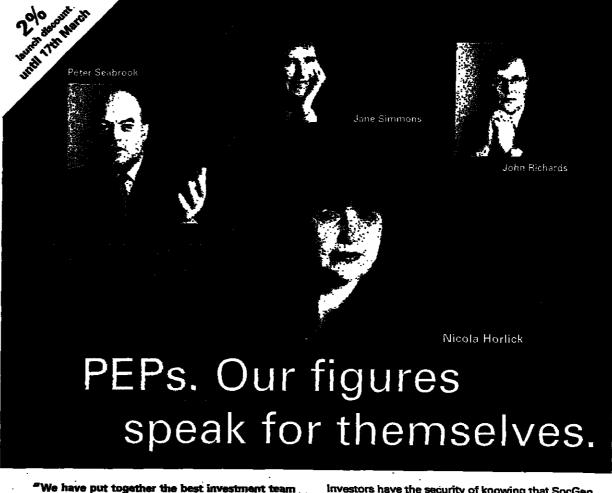
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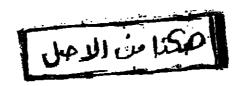
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ASSET MANAGEMENT The shape of things to come



- The benel

The benefits of being in a friendly society

Personal equity plan (PEP) managers and Tessa providers are looking anxiously towards the Budget as Gordon Brown is expected to release the full details of the new Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), which will replace the existing tax-efficient investments plans. For friendly societies, however, the new accounts will represent an opportunity.

ards and leaders

The Chancellor has already announced that friendly societies will be able to offer ISAs, in addition to their existing tax-free, 10-year savings plans. It in effect means that they will be able to compete on more or less level terms with the big institutions when it comes to attracting savers. However, the chances of friendly societies spending massive amounts on advertising any new ISAs are slim. In reality. they are likely to continue offering their members a range of

products with few frills or costs. At the heart of the friendly society deal is the 10-year savings plan. These accounts are able to offer tax-free savings because they contain an element

"Friendly societies provide a nicely packaged savings product which grows tax-free," says Barry Chambers, marketing director at Family Assurance, one of the leading societies. "A lot of people earmark the cash for a particular event, such as wedding anniversary celebrations, or just some cash for chil-

dren or university costs." The Government is keen to encourage, people to have adequate life assurance and that is why the plans are granted tax-

How to fix

credit rates

The rules on how

lenders advertise

their loans are set

to change. John

Andrew reports

At long last the Department

of Trade and Industry (DTI)

is taking a serious look at the

regulations which prescribe

the way in which mortgages

are promoted. Last month

the DTI published a consul-

tation paper, "Clarification and Simplification of UK

If the proposals are in-

troduced, it will end years of

confusion for the consumer.

The concept of the annual

percentage rate of charge,

more commonly known as

the APR, was introduced in

yardstick representing the

true cost of credit including,

for example, any arrangement fee and the cost of

taking legal charges to secure

In 1980 regulations were

introduced requiring the

APR to be shown in all credit

advertisements featuring an

interest rate. The message was clear and precise: be-

their APR according to the

"the lower the APR, the bet-

were "simplified and modern-

ter the credit deal".

the borrowing.

1974. It was designed as a low rate of interest for a short

tire loan.

Consumer Credit Law".

The tax-breaks that the friendly movement can offer their savers crease in the amount of cash will be extended when ISAs arrive. Simon Read reports

are generally sold as savings of a £970 deduction from their

The maximum monthly amount you can put into a friendly society 10-year savings plan is £25, or savers can invest tax-free status, the plans must be maintained for 10 years cashing in early could mean a tax liability or the return of less than you've paid in.

Worse, if the plan is closed before 12 monthly payments have been made, there will be no return of cash at all. This is because of the life assurance element. Payments in the early years predominantly go towards paying the charges of that. However, some of the cash will also be invested on your behalf to ensure a payout after 10 years.

The investment is managed by professional fund managers who use their expertise to get maximum returns. In effect, the plans work in exactly the same vay as endowment policies where some of the premiums pay for the life cover, and the rest is

invested on your behalf. Returns on the friendly society plans will be hit by the cost of life cover and expenses and charges, although friendly societies - strang by criticism about the size of charges - have been working hard to reduce costs as

much as possible However, an illustration from Homeowners friendly society shows that someone investing the maximum amount free status. However, the life as- each month - 3,000 over 10 surance element of the plan is years - would pay £598 in depretty small and the accounts ductions, producing a real effect

dard variable rate for the rest

of the mortgage term. This

had the blessing of Lacots,

the organisation of the na-

tion's Trading Standards Of-

one or two lenders argued

that a fixed mortgage could

be followed by another. They

therefore based the APR for

their fixed-rate mortgages

on the fixed rate for the en-

tire term of the mortgage.

All went well at first. Then

ficers (TSOs).

fund. These deductions would bring investment growth of 9 per cent down to just 4.7 per cent a year. Hardly headline returns.

On the other hand, not using up to £270 a year. To get the full a friendly society savings plan means losing out on the tax benefits. IFA Promotion, a marketing body promoting independent financial advice, calculates that people already saving with an endowment policy are wasting £50m a year in tax by not saving in a friendly society.

Too many people overlook friendly societies when planning their savings and investments." says David White, head of sales and marketing at Tunbridge

Wells Equitable. "As far as using their tax-free premium allowances is concerned, my advice is use it or lose it."

There are, in fact, hundreds of friendly societies around the country, but only a few offer products to the general public. Most restrict themselves to providing a range of benefits for their members.

This shows itself in the membership figures of friendly societies - 6 million people are part of the movement but only 1.5 million have a tex-free savings plan. The largest national friend-

ly society is Liverpool Victoria. for You', sponsored by Wesleyan Looking ahead, the soci- Assurance, can be obtained by eties would like to see an insending in the coupon on page 4.

people can save in their 10-year savings plan. "We would like to see the Chancellor increase the limit," says Mr Chambers. "The accounts are very attractive to many people who like the discipline of having to save regularly. An increased limit would improve the attraction."

In the meantime, the larger societies are gearing themselves up for the launch of ISAs next year. Many already have ISAready accounts, but haven't been making a big noise about them. We'll be concentrating on offering the accounts to our loyal customers," says Mr Chambers.

The Independent's 'Guide to Making Your Investments Work

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Micropal/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 (Legal & General since launch) to 03.03.98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to house performance. From 06.04.99 tax credits will no longer be able to be reclaimed by PEPs investing in equity based unit trusts. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up back the amount

> invested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs

investing wholly in unit rusts. Full written details are available on request. as at 03-03-98. The Government published 2 consultative document in December 1997 on proposals for Individual Savinga Accounts (ISAs) m be launched in April 1999. The terms and timits for convening an existing PEP into an ISA are being considered as part of the consultation. Legal & General (Direct) Limited. Registered in England No. 2702080. stered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London ECAN 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General

NatWest was one of the lenders who took this new approach. A TSO in Devon took exception and successmembers of which are fully brought a prosecution, regulated by the Personal but this was overturned in sment Authority and June 1993 by the High Court. (MRO for the purposes of recommending, advising The nation's TSOs were on and selling life shell-shocked, especially as their counsel warned that assurance and inve products bearing this method could result in some lenders securing an

Despite its concerns, Lacots issued a statement to its members suggesting that it would be acceptable for lenders to calculate the APR for credit offers where there was an initial period of dis-count, on the basis that the discount applied to the entire period of the loan.

advantage by offering a very

period and calculating its

APR on that basis for the en-

cause lenders "must calculate Enter the period of deeply discounted mortgages - only same special rules, you can 1.49 per cent (APR 1.5per compare one type of credit cent) for first 12 months. As with another". In a nutshell, the rate would revert to the borrower's variable standard In 1989 these regulations rate after a year, logically the yardstick should have been nearer APR 9 per cent.

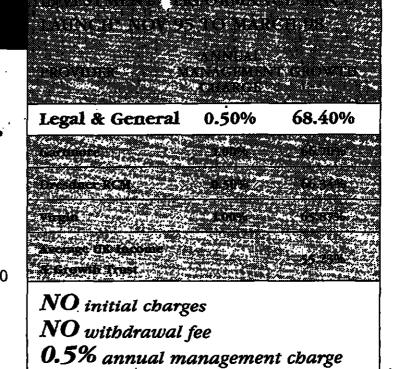
ised". Sadly, there was no at-The DTI is now propostempt to cover new products ing that there should be con--mainly fixed mortgages - and sistency, with lenders basing there was a complete disregard their APR on the discounted for the new ways in which rate for the period of the credit was being promoted. lower rate and on their stan-Looking back, it is incredulous dard variable rate for the Westminster, the DTI and remainder of the time. the OFT did not recognise that The DTI is to be con-

promoting credit on TV is gratulated on its proposals. different from advertising in However, its consultation the written word. With no guidelines as to should be extended to also how to promote fixed-rate cover the way credit cards are promoted. Currently, it takes mortgages the industry dea genius to decide which vised its own method. It was piece of plastic is the better decided to base the APR on buy. Let's have a level playing the fixed rate for the period field for all forms of credit that the rate was fixed, folnot just part of it! lowed by the leader's stan-

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Looking for a new haven

The end of PEPs has prompted a rush for lesser known tax-free investments. Juliet Oxborrow looks at some options

waiting for Tuesday's Budget to find out whether they will be ISAs. Or, as has been mooted, will

relief at your highest rate of in-

come tax. So a 40 per cent tax-

to start afresh with their ISA forward unused tax relief from allowance? Whatever Gordon Brown announces, it is unlikely investors can sit back and relax. One lucrative haven for investors likely to exceed the proposed ISA limit is a pension. Provided you have the net rel- so, this would still give a £1,000 evant earnings, money moved into a pension will receive tax

forced to transfer their PEPs into man. Investors with a large potential ISA excess can maxing schemes and allow investors into their pension by carrying the previous six years.

Tuesday could be the abolition to defer UK tax, not to avoid it of higher-rate tax relief on pension contributions, leaving only basic and lower-rate relief. Even pension investment an immediate uplift of up to £298.

PEP investors will be keenly payer who puts £1,000 into a ample and moving investments pension receives a further con- offshore should get expert tribution of £666.67 from the tax advice before doing so. Offshore investments are offered by many the Chancellor ring-fence exist- imise the amount they can put iders, but while offshore havens like the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Bermuda and Luxembourg are outside the UK's Bad news in the Budget on tax regime, they can only be used

> For example, offshore savings accounts can pay interest gross but interest must be declared on the relevant year's tax return and paid in due course. Investors considering fol- The one big advantage is that Day Notice, paying 7.85 per cent

arrives, you can be earning in- 90 days notice for withdrawal, terest on the taxable element.

Offshore savings accounts

and, needing 30 days less notice, Northern Rock (Guernsey) Offshore 60, which pays 7.65 per with decent rates of interest include Britannia International 90cent gross on £10,000.

lowing Geoffrey Robinson's ex- until the deadline to pay the tax gross on £10,000, which requires nearest offshore equivalent to come tax. This means tax can be

PEPs and unit trusts, can defer tax for a longer period of time. Returns accumulate inside the fund so no tax is payable until the fund is cashed in. At this Offshore roll-up funds, the point, they are charged to in-

deferred for many years, perhaps until the investor retires and moves into a lower tax outside of the UK tax regime. Income seekers looking off-

shore can opt for distribution funds. However, as with offshore deposit accounts, tax is payable on these every year when income is distributed.

An alternative income generator is an offshore insurance bond. Returns accumulate in the bond, but up to 5 per cent a year can be withdrawn as income. Tax is not payable on withdrawals until the bond is encashed

bonds can also offer 5 per cent income and, according to Paul Boni of independent financial advisers Berry, Birch & Noble: They can be more attractive than their offshore equivalents. With onshore insurance bonds, tax is only paid on the difference between higher-rate and basicbeen taxed internally throughout Finance magazine'.

the investment term. Offshore bonds can suffer the full higherrate of tax on encashment."

Haven on earth: Bermuda, where

investments disappear from the

Although the panic is now on to keep investments as taxshould consider whether they are actually prone to tax. Worrying about tax is a misplaced concern for many, as few breach limit, currently £6,500 for the 1997/1998 financial year, at which this tax is payable.

By realising gains gradually over a period of years, most inthe taxable threshold. Couples can make the most of their tax allowances by allocating assets between them. Married couples have an advantage in that they counting as a disposal for tax purposes. Income tax is harder to avoid. Consequently, many investors will want to think about keeping their PEPs and ISAs first and foremost for income-bearing investments.

Finally, Mr Boni warns that with markets at their current high peaks investors should be looking to consolidate the growth However, UK insurance they have made so far, in case the market takes a dive. "I'd consider transferring to a protected investment such as the Legal & General's Growth & Protection PER" he says. "It tracks four world stock markets and guarantees to return your original capital at the end of six years."

rate tax, because the bond has The author is editor of 'Personal'



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It's not too late to start saving in a PEP. Sarah Barnett explains how they work

If you are a regular reader of the financial pages, you will be no stranger to the personal equity plan (PEP). Although its demise is imminent, it still represents one of the best ways to invest in the stock market.

PEPs enable you to invest in shares or collective investment vehicles, such as unit and investment trusts, free of income and capital gains tax. Each year you can put up to £6,000 in what is known as a general PEP. In addition, you can put up to £3,000 in a single company PEP, which can hold ordinary shares in one UK or EU company. You are only allowed one of each of these PEPs per tax

There is no minimum investment stipulation but, in practice, most providers will not permit investments of less than £1,000 for lump sums or £50 for monthly contributions.

PEPs do not have a fixed time span and you are free to cash in your investments whenever you choose. But to ensure you recover from any stock market setbacks. you should regard a PEP as a relatively long-term commitment. A general PEP allows

you to invest up to £6,000 in

shares of companies listed in

the following investments: ■ Ordinary and preference

the UK or on a recognised EU stock exchange. ■ Fixed-interest securities of UK companies (better known as corporate bonds). ■ Unit trusts, investment trusts and open-ended investment companies (Oeics), which are at least 50 per cent invested in either or both of the above assets: these are known as "qualifying funds". "Non-qualifying" unit trusts, investment trusts and Oeics (those that don't meet the 50 per cent rule); however, these can only account for a quarter, up to a maximum of £1,500, of your gen-

eral PEP investment. If you are a first time investor, or cannot stomach The author is editor of What dramatic fluctuations in the Investment'.

value of your funds, you should look to invest in pooled vehicles such as unit trusts and investment trusts rather going directly into equities. These give you diversification and reduce

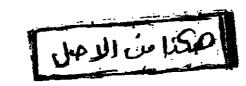
your exposure to risk. You should also be cautious if you are about to dip a toe into shares for the first time as the market has recently been experiencing record peaks. Although this growth in share prices shows no signs yet of abating, you are buying shares at a time when the

market is expensive. If you do not want to be exposed to the full thrills and spills of the stock market, you may wish to consider guaranteed or corporate bond PEPs. Guaranteed PEPs provide a degree of protection against stock markets falling while corporate bond PEPs provide a fixed return.

For those brave enough to invest in equities, Doug Brodie, director of independent financial adviser PEPmaster, recommends making regular contributions. As he points out: "The danger of lump sums is that you could be buying into the market when it is at its most expensive whereas, with regular monthly savings, you can guarantee that one of your premiums will be within 15 days of the lowest price during the year."

However, not everyone will benefit from having a PEP. Charges can wipe out the tax breaks for lower rate income-tax payers. There is also some doubt as to whether you are likely to make much money by investing at the moment.

The litmus test to deciding whether to invest in equities is do you think that the market is very high? The PEP only works on the basis of profit. If you think there is no profit to be made then it's a waste of time," says Mr Brodie.





A man, a dream, a plot

Mix hi-tech Internet and Io-tech elbow grease and you can save thousands, writes Mary Wilson

Put together the Internet and a plot of a phonecall from Tony and Ishbel land and you have two happy self-build couples. Peter and Linda Vincent had been hunting for their perfect plot for almost three years, when they discovered a beautiful site for sale near Strete, in Dartmouth. They had decided to build a house designed by Potton Limited, which specialises in timber-frame kits. But this site had planning for two four-bedroom bungalows, not one.

Para All Miles

"It was also far too large and too expensive," says Peter, "but we were determined to buy it." Peter and Linda had been living in the Midlands but wanted to move to south Devon. They had looked at lots of houses, all of which needed work. Then they went to a self-building show in Birmingham.

"We were caught by the bug," says Peter. "I was working as an IT manager, so was used to the Internet and started writing bits and pieces on the Individual Homes Plotfinder forum. We saw the site near Strete and put a note on the forum saying the plot has sea views, good access, is close to services, is there anyone out there who might be interested in joining forces buying the plot?" Not long after, they received

Strart, who wanted to meet up and have a look at the site. They discovered they only lived a few miles apart and both.

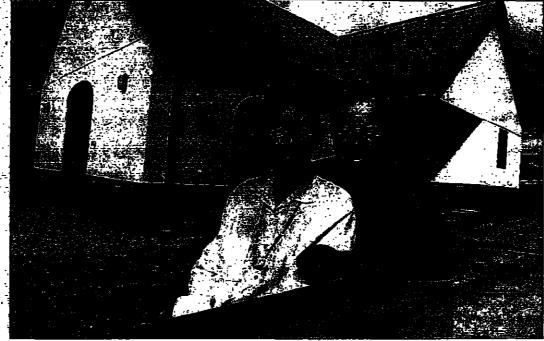
had decided to build a Potton home. Although they both originally wanted to build houses, they had to think about putting up bungalows instead. So Ishbel e-mailed Potton for brochure details from one of its subsidiaries, the Bungalow Company.

Throughout the project, the couples liaised with each other via the Internet. They researched the project and also dealt with Potton on-line.

"I found the Internet particularly useful when looking for materials as I had decided to do all the wiring and plumbing myself," said Peter Vincent. "The only problems we encountered were building delays as there was more waste to remove from the site than originally anticipated."

The couple were working full-time while the house was going up, so they ended up doing 16 hours a day. Linda did all the decoration and has also done most of the landscaping.

But the two couples have not only found themselves the perfect site, via



The house that Pete built: Peter and Linda Vincent and their self-build home in Strete

a few thousand pounds by building their own homes. The two houses cost about £100,000 each to build including £31,000 each for the plot and are

and the Vincents just three weeks ago. the home of your dreams if you are the building work progresses. prepared to give time to adequate re-

the Internet, they have also saved quite We now have a house we would never bave been able to afford in a mil-

lion years," says Ishbel Stuart. Peter has learnt one very important lesson. "Although I had no probexpected to be worth £150,000 each lem borrowing the money, I didn't when completely finished. The Stnarts think enough about cash flow," he moved into their home last November says. Lenders expect you to put up 20 to 25 per cent of the cost of the land. Self-building is one way to live in They then lend money in tranches as

However, these sums of money are fore the show, ring 0181 710 2186. search before you start. "It is a lent in arrears. "So, you mustn't chance to use your initiative and you spend your capital up front, which is can always find a way round problems. what I did," says Peter. The timber- 263300 or e-mail sales@potton.co.uk.

frame kit will be the most expensive lump sum and the supplier will want to be paid on the nail. Either you need to have the money for this, arrange credit with the company or organise

The Individual Homes Home Building and Renovating Show, 19 to 22 March, at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre. For half-price tickets bought be-

Potton and the Bungalow Co, 01767

How good neighbours can become good friends

It is easy to believe that the only neighbours worth mentioning are those from bell. But the truth is that many more of us stay put because the people next door make life so pleasant than are driven out by long-running disputes. The agents Knight Frank estimate that while 5 per cent of people cite their neighbours as the reason for moving, at least twice as many won't consider selling because they re-

gard them as irreplaceable. Neighbours are as likely to be entrusted with the intimate complications of family life as they are with the keys, and since it comes with the territory,

It's not just bad

neighbours who influence sales, says Penny Jackson

is pretty daunting. But for those who do have to move, it's not always a matter of closing the book on the neighbourhood. More than a few are as anxious about who buys their house as they are about where they go next.

Extraordinary expressions of

can do." They duly put in an offer of couldn't have shown my face again." £30,000 less which she accepted.

She even stock with them through pleted within a month took six. "Eight lots of people wanted the house, neighbourliness sometimes go well be-some of them with cash. I turned them youd the call of duty. Gold Walker, down because I didn't like them," says it is not surprising that the thought of who lived in her London house for Miss Walker. The house had been in very keen that the buyers should not weeks later, though, when no other starting all over again in a new area more than 40 years, felt an obligation the family since 1933. It would have object to hunting and one offer was offers had been made."

to her neighbours that had her sell- been terrible to see it divided up. The turned down because the neighbours ing agents in despair and her chosen spirit of the bouse would have been didn't like the person. If the vendors buyers pinching themselves. The cou-destroyed . A lot of that was to do with intend to live locally they know they'll ple were surprised to be shown out our friends next door and I wanted never hear the end of it if the new with the words: "You know what the that to continue. I was going to keep agents want for the house, don't in touch with them and if I had landyou? Ridiculous isn't it. See what you ed them with complete horrors I themselves as their neighbours'

to run prospective buyers through a ter some keen buyers had been round a collapsed sale of their house and a checklist, it is rare that they will make to see the house and meet the neighprocess which could have been com- a financial sacrifice. "A great many of bours. "He told us he couldn't possitheir good intentions are forgotten in bly sell to them because they smoked the end," says Martin Lamb of Knight and his neighbours were very upset Frank's Exeter office. "But we have about it as they were asthmatic. It just sold a house for someone who was didn't seem to matter so much two

owners turn out to be appailing."

Some sellers seem almost to regard guardian. One agent recalls getting a While it is not unusual for people call from an agitated client the day af-

PENNY JACKSON

A case of false economics

Just about everyone has had the education hotspots is a chance to air their thoughts gearing up for an intense few on how Caterham Barracks should be developed. As an historic site in the centre of town, people feel they have schools and if parents don't a particular stake in its development.

So the community planning weekend run by the developers Linden gathered almost 1,000 people - from local schools to local MPs. Workshops were organised into stages - problems, pletion by the end of June dreams and solutions which threw up ideas such as crease in the discussion the rebuilding of a cricket about schools here and pavilion and a network of cycleways. But according to one person who didn't attend the weekend, crucial lessons are in danger of being overlooked.

Huw Thomas, architect of the very successful Peninsular Barracks scheme in Winchester, says that fewer houses, good landscaping and an emphasis on it being an historical site are what drive the values up, not packing the homes in.

"In Winchester a third of the land is garden and woodland. From what I have seen of the Caterham plans, it looks like a typical case of developer-itus is eating away as much land as they can get away with."

Caterham has been warned.

As parents are gradually coming to terms with the might like to know that she February offers of places for employed Gertrude Jekyll to

months. South Bucks has more than its fair share of good independent and state start the ball rolling now, by September they could be many miles from the school gates. Damian Gray, of Knight Frank's Beaconsfield office, says that everyone wants to be settled before the summer, "That means comand there's a marked in-

'Developer-itus is eating away as much land as they can get away with'

around the dinner table." In Chesham, a grade II listed house is on the market for £750,000 and in Wooburn Common, a six-bedroom house with "private and substantial grounds" is £900,000.

Around the same price is being asked for a Surrey house that once belonged to Sir Oswald Mosley. Upper Ifold house in Dunsford was his home before his blackshirt days.

Anyone warmed by the portrayal of his first wife in the recent television series the next school year, one of set out the gardens.

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Museums for mantelpieces

Rosalind Russell reveals a legal way to take gallery and museum exhibits home with you

described by marketing types as a desti-nation shop. That is, you don't have to pay entry into the gallery or museum to buy a memento. They are already hugely popular in America. In New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art not only has an in-gallery shop, it has another busy Design Store on 44 W53rd St selling products for the home, including furniture and lighting.

It's the equivalent of buying the T-shirt without having to go to the gig: useful, on a tight weekend break schedule.

The new National Gallery shop will sell goods inspired by works in the gallery, including a specially designed range of "image lights". They are ultra modern and feature detail from paintings in the gallery. They'll cost £25.

It's hardly surprising museums and galleries are turning themselves into department stores when you consider the amount of money to be made. Last year more than £97m worth of V&A brand tableware, furnishings and fashion pieces were sold worldwide. That includes everything from the V&A brand name talcum powder, sold in Marks and Spencer, to duver covers by Donna, carpets by Ryalux and wallpaper by Osborne and Little. Not all the branded goods are sold in the muse-V&A's fortunes and made it a formidable year, the museum reported a growth in 47 per cent up, proving, says the museum, its "maturity" as a gift buying venue. And lection to inspire designers, the opportu- at £29.95. nities appear limitless.

young contemporary British designers. Plates, cups, saucers and teapots are sold as individual pieces, making the purchase feel more like patronising young design than cover a wide range, from £15 for a ceramic mug to £1,000 for a large red decorative plate by Rupert Spira, a collectable designer. 770444.

On 1 April, a new shop opens within the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. It is called William Morris Kensington Fruits is expected to appeal to customers comfortable with a classic design logo. The theme is apricots, peaches and cherries painted on a crackle glaze mustard-yellow background. The collection covers everything from a thimble at £8.95 to a set of dessert plates

> The V&A's Iznik ceramics collection in the Islamic and Ceramic Galleries was the insoiration for an Iznik Revivals collection of five plates, made by craftsmen in Kutahaya and Bursa, Turkey. The designs use the traditional shades of turquoise, aquamarine, green and red. At £120 a plate, they're more likely to be decorative than functional. A range of green Weldon ware is made by the grandson of the original maker, whose work is displayed in the mu-seum. Prices go up to £76.95 for an oval

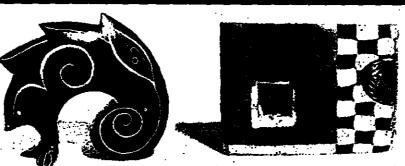
> You might think the Imperial War Museum would find it well nigh impossible to muscle in on this destination shopping business, but it has risen to the challenge. The Cabinet War Room in Westminster - part of the IWM - has just had its shop re-fitted in time for the Easter holiday rush. The mahogany fittings echo the War Rooms, as do the goods for sale.

Old-fashioned telephones, in red, green um, but the licence fees have boosted the or black, cost £49.95. A radio, with the carcass designed to look like the 1930s and business partner. In the annual report last 1940s radios and showing the old wave bands, but with modern interior, costs profits of 45 per cent. Sales at the shop were £29.95. For your very own war-torn office desk you can buy an electric fan (£99) like those in every civil servants' office in Inwith more than 5 million objects in the col-

Other retailers have been quick to copy. The Craft Council takes up some of the The mail order firm The Art Room offers V&A shop space, selling one-off pieces by a shower curtain printed with Alma-Tadema's A Favourite Custom, painted in 1909 and hanging in the Tate. With detachable waterproof liner, it costs £39.95.

just buying a boxed set from Ikea. Prices Contacts: Cabinet War Rooms, Clive Steps, King Charles Street, London SWLA 2AQ (0171-930 6961); The Art Room 01993





Crafts Council Shop: above, Christie Brown's Male Head and Shoulders'; far left Fiona Salazar's 'Uncurling', and left, Helen Talbot's 'Cooking it up for seven little men'

3 TO VIEW BY A GOLF COURSE

Number Loansdear Cottages, near Mor peth Northum berland, sits right oppo-

site the 18th



Morpeth Golf Club. Bought by the present owners 11 years ago, when it was semi-derelict, it has been renovated and restored as a three-bedroom, two-reception house. Apart from a 21-ft reception hall, there is a 20-ft lounge with doors to the rear garden, and a large dining- room. The secluded garden includes mature trees, borders, and vegetable and fruit plots. GA Town & Country is asking £180,000 (01670 516711).

in Bramley. Surrey, i on a private road that runs along the northem boundary of an



course. The 12-year-old bungalow has a 25-ft reception hall, drawing- and dining-rooms, a study and three bedrooms. The drawing-room has doors to the garden and terrace, and an electrically operated sun-blind. The large kitchen/ breakfast room is fitted with gas hob, double oven and built-in breakfast bar. The gardens over more than a third of an acre, include a greenhouse, a summer house, a garage and lawns, with open views across the golf course. £450,000 through Browns (01483 531166).

Spindlewood, at Pyrford. near Woking, Surrey, has a 100-ft garden that backs dir-



the golf course. The three-reception, five-bedroom house, which was built in 1964, has since been extended. On the ground floor there is a study, a large family room, and a 25-ft sitting-room with a raised fireplace and sliding patio doors leading to the garden. The main bedroom includes a dressing area with built-in wardrobes. The agent, Curchods, is asking £360,000 (01932

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